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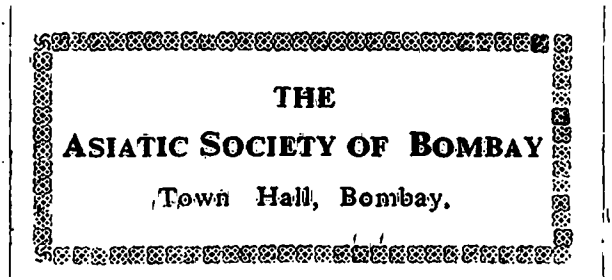

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THE

LIVES

OF THE MOST EMINENT

ENGLISH POETS;

WITH

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THEIR

B. 3227.

WORKS.

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By SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME IV.

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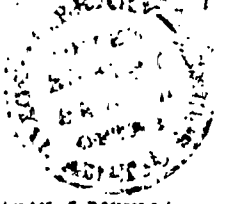

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CONTENTS

OF THE

FOURTH VOLUME.

POPE,	p. 1
PITT,	241
THOMSON,	249
WATTS,	275
A. PHILIPS,	293
WEST,	311
COLLINS,	321
DYER,	333
SHENSTONE,	341
YOUNG,	357
WALLER,	433
AKENSIDE,	447
GRAY,	461
LYTTELTON,	487

POPE.

POPE.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whoſe rank or ſtation was never aſcertained: we are informed that they were of *gentle blood*; that his father was of a family of which the Earl of Downe was the head, and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, Eſquire, of York, who had likewiſe three ſons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the ſervice of Charles the Firſt; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the ſiſter inherited what ſequeſtrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard obſerved, to ſhew what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a ſhop or on the Exchange has never been diſcovered. Both parents were papiſts.

Pope was from his birth of a conſtitution tender and delicate; but is ſaid to have ſhewn remarkable gentleneſs and ſweetneſs of diſpoſition. The weakneſs of his body continued through his life, but the mildneſs of his mind perhaps ended with his childhood. His voice, when he was young, was ſo pleaſing, that he was called in fondneſs the *little Nightingale*.

Being not ſent early to ſchool, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was ſeven or eight years old became a lover of books. He firſt learned to write by imitating printed books; a ſpecies of penmanſhip in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant.

When

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampſhire under Taverner, a Romiſh prieſt, who, by a method very rarely practiſed, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now firſt regularly initiated in poetry by the peruſal of Ogylby's *Homer*, and Sandys's *Ovid*: Ogylby's aſſiſtance he never repaid with any praiſe; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the *Iliad*, that Engliſh poetry owed much of its preſent beauty to his tranſlations. Sandys very rarely attempted original compoſition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was conſiderable, he was removed to a ſchool at Twyford near Wincheſter, and again to another ſchool about Hyde-park Corner; from which he uſed ſometimes to ſtroll to the playhouſe, and was ſo delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogylby's *Iliad*, with ſome verſes of his own intermixed, which he perſuaded his ſchool-fellows to act, with the addition of his maſter's gardener, who perſonated *Ajax*.

At the two laſt ſchools he uſed to repreſent himſelf as having loſt part of what Taverner had taught him, and on his maſter at Twyford he had already exerciſed his poetry in a lampoon. Yet under thoſe maſters he tranſlated more than a fourth part of the *Metamorphoſes*. If he kept the ſame proportion in his other exerciſes, it cannot be thought that his loſs was great.

He tells of himſelf, in his poems, that *he liſp'd in numbers*; and uſed to ſay that he could not remember the time when he began to make verſes. In the ſtyle of fiction it might have been ſaid of him as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle, *the bees ſwarmed about his mouth.*

About the time of the Revolution his father, who was undoubtedly diſappointed by the ſudden blaſt of popiſh proſperity, quitted his trade, whatever it was, and retired to Binfield in Windſor Foreſt, with about twenty thouſand pounds; for which, being conſcientiouſly determined not to intruſt it to the government, he found no better uſe than that of locking it up in a cheſt, and taking from

from it what his expences required; and his life was long enough to conſume a great part of it, before his ſon came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father when he was about twelve years old; and there he had for a few months the aſſiſtance of one Deane, another prieſt, of whom he learned only to conſtrue a little of *Tully's Offices*. How Mr. Deane could ſpend, with a boy who had tranſlated ſo much of *Ovid*, ſome months over a ſmall part of *Tully's Offices*, it is now vain to enquire.

Of a youth ſo ſucceſsfully employed, and ſo conſpicuouſly improved, a minute account muſt be naturally deſired; but curioſity muſt be contented with confuſed, imperfect, and ſometimes improbable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage from external help, reſolved thenceforward to direct himſelf, and at twelve formed a plan of ſtudy which he completed with little other incitement than the deſire of excellence.

His primary and principal purpoſe was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally

concurred, by propoſing ſubjects, and obliging him to correct his performances by many reviſals; after which the old gentleman, when he was ſatisfied, would ſay, *theſe are good rhymes.*

In his peruſal of the Engliſh poets he ſoon diſtinguiſhed the verſification of Dryden, which he conſidered as the model to be ſtudied, and was impreſſed with ſuch veneration for his inſtructer, that he perſuaded ſome friends to take him to the coffee-houſe which Dryden frequented, and pleaſed himſelf with having ſeen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, ſome days before Pope was twelve; ſo early muſt he therefore have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wiſh that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreſeen the greatneſs of his young admirer?

The earlieſt of Pope's productions is his *Ode on Solitude*, written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performances at the ſame age.

His

His time was now ſpent wholly in reading and writing. As he read the Claſſicks, he amuſed himſelf with tranſlating them; and at fourteen made a verſion of the firſt book of the *Thebais*, which, with ſome reviſion, he afterwards publiſhed. He muſt have been at this time, if he had no help, a conſiderable proficient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's Fables, which had then been not long publiſhed, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own ſkill in giving Chaucer a more faſhionable appearance, and put *January and May*, and the *Prologue of the Wife of Bath*, into modern Engliſh. He tranſlated likewiſe the Epiſtle of *Sappho to Phaon* from Ovid, to complete the verſion, which was before imperfect; and wrote ſome other ſmall pieces, which he afterwards printed.

He ſometimes imitated the Engliſh poets, and profeſſed to have written at fourteen his poem upon *Silence*, after Rocheſter's *Nothing*. He had now formed his verſification, and in the ſmoothneſs of his numbers ſurpaſſed his original: but this is a ſmall part of his

praiſe;

praiſe; he diſcovers ſuch acquaintance both with human life and publick affairs, as is not eaſily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of fourteen in *Windſor Foreſt*.

Next year he was deſirous of opening to himſelf new ſources of knowledge, by making himſelf acquainted with modern languages; and removed for a time to London, that he might ſtudy French and Italian, which, as he deſired nothing more than to read them, were by diligent application ſoon diſpatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever made much uſe in his ſubſequent ſtudies.

He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himſelf with his own poetry. He tried all ſtyles, and many ſubjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epick poem, with panegyricks on all the Princes of Europe; and, as he confeſſes, *thought himſelf the greateſt genius that ever was*. Self-confidence is the firſt requiſite to great undertakings; he, indeed, who forms his opinion of himſelf in ſolitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to errour; but it was the felicity

licity of Pope to rate himſelf at his real value.

Moſt of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgement, afterwards deſtroyed; *Alcander*, the epick poem, was burnt by the perſuaſion of Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of *St. Genevieve*. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his ſtudies it is related, that he tranſlated Tully *on old Age*; and that, beſides his books of poetry and criticiſm, he read *Temple's Eſſays* and *Locke on human Underſtanding*. His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been ſufficiently extenſive and multifarious; for his early pieces ſhew, with ſufficient evidence, his knowledge of books.

He that is pleaſed with himſelf, eaſily imagines that he ſhall pleaſe others. Sir William Trumbal, who had been ambaſſador at Conſtantinople, and ſecretary of ſtate, when he retired from buſineſs, fixed his reſidence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet ſixteen, was introduced to the ſtateſman

of

of ſixty, and ſo diſtinguiſhed himſelf, that their interviews ended in friendſhip and correſpondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of ſplendid acquaintance, and he ſeems to have wanted neither diligence nor ſucceſs in attracting the notice of the great; for from his firſt entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with thoſe whoſe rank or ſtation made them moſt conſpicuous.

From the age of ſixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his Paſtorals, which were ſhewn to the Poets and Critics of that time; as they well deſerved, they were read with admiration, and many praiſes were beſtowed upon them and upon the Preface, which is both elegant and learned in a high degree: they were, however, not publiſhed till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope, are diſtinguiſhed among the Engliſh Poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were publiſhed in his childhood, and therefore of him only can it be certain

that

that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer ſtudies.

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who ſeems to have had among his contemporaries his full ſhare of reputation, to have been eſteemed without virtue, and careſſed without good-humour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherley wrote verſes in his praiſe, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himſelf, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleaſant to remark how ſoon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat criticks with contempt, though he had yet ſuffered nothing from them.

But the fondneſs of Wycherley was too violent to laſt. His eſteem of Pope was ſuch, that he ſubmitted ſome poems to his reviſion; and when Pope, perhaps proud of ſuch confidence, was ſufficiently bold in his criticiſms, and liberal in his alterations, the old ſcribbler was angry to ſee his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always conſidered him with

kindneſs,

kindneſs, and viſited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correſpondents was Mr. Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particular but that he uſed to ride a-hunting in a tye-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amuſing himſelf with poetry and criticiſm; and ſometimes ſent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear ſuch remarks as were now-and-then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile verſion of *Statius* into his hands for correction.

Their correſpondence afforded the publick its firſt knowledge of Pope's Epiſtolary Powers; for his Letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs. Thomas, and ſhe many years afterwards ſold them to Curll, who inſerted them in a volume of his Miſcellanies.

Walſh, a name yet preſerved among the minor poets, was one of his firſt encouragers. His regard was gained by the Paſtorals; and from him Pope received the counſel by which he ſeems to have regulated his ſtudies. Walſh adviſed

adviſed him to correctneſs, which, as he told him, the Engliſh poets had hitherto neglected, and which therefore was left to him as a baſis of fame; and, being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a paſtoral comedy, like thoſe which are read ſo eagerly in Italy; a deſign which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himſelf a poet; and, thinking himſelf entitled to poetical converſation, began at ſeventeen to frequent Will's, a coffee-houſe on the north ſide of Ruſſel-ſtreet in Covent-garden, where the wits of that time uſed to aſſemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accuſtomed to preſide.

During this period of his life he was indefatigably diligent, and inſatiably curious; wanting health for violent, and money for expenſive pleaſures, and having certainly excited in himſelf very ſtrong deſires of intellectual eminence, he ſpent much of his time over his books; but he read only to ſtore his mind with facts and images, ſeizing

all that his authors preſented with undiſtinguiſhing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving. Judgement is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books muſt compare one opinion or one ſtyle with another; and when he compares, muſt neceſſarily diſtinguiſh, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himſelf of his ſtudies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amuſement, from twenty to twenty-ſeven for improvement and inſtruction; that in the firſt part of this time he deſired only to know, and in the ſecond he endeavoured to judge.

The Paſtorals, which had been for ſome time handed about among poets and critics, were at laſt printed (1709) in Tonſon's Miſcellany, in a volume which began with the Paſtorals of Philips, and ended with thoſe of Pope.

The ſame year was written the *Eſſay on Criticiſm*; a work which diſplays ſuch extent of comprehenſion, ſuch nicety of diſtinction, ſuch

ſuch acquaintance with mankind, and ſuch knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the matureſt age and longeſt experience. It was publiſhed about two years afterwards, and being praiſed by Addiſon in the *Spectator* with ſufficient liberality, met with ſo much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he ſays, "found "himſelf attacked, without any manner of "provocation on his ſide, and attacked in his "perſon, inſtead of his writings, by one who "was wholly a ſtranger to him, at a time "when all the world knew he was perſecuted "by fortune; and not only ſaw that this was "attempted in a clandeſtine manner, with "the utmoſt falſehood and calumny, but "found that all this was done by a little af-"fected hypocrite, who had nothing in his "mouth at the ſame time but truth, candour, "friendſhip, good-nature, humanity, and "magnanimity."

How the attack was clandeſtine is not eaſily perceived, nor how his perſon is depreciated; but he ſeems to have known ſomething of Pope's character, in whom may be diſcovered

an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues.

The pamphlet is ſuch as rage might be expected to dictate. He ſuppoſes himſelf to be aſked two queſtions; whether the Eſſay will ſucceed, and who or what is the author.

Its ſucceſs he admits to be ſecured by the falſe opinions then prevalent; the author he concludes to be *young and raw.*

Firſt, becauſe he diſcovers a ſufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath raſhly undertaken a taſk infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author ſtruts, and affects the dictatorian air, he plainly ſhews that at the ſame time he is under the rod, and while he pretends to give law to others is a pedantick ſlave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he hath, like ſchool-boys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himſelf. Fifthly, he is almoſt perpetually in the wrong.

All theſe poſitions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks; but his deſire to do miſchief

miſchief is greater than his power. He has, however, juſtly criticiſed ſome paſſages. In theſe lines,

There are whom heaven has bleſs'd with ſtore of wit,
Yet want as much again to manage it;
For wit and judgement ever are at ſtrife—

it is apparent that *wit* has two meanings, and that what is wanted, though called *wit*, is truly judgement. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but, not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the firſt couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. "By the way, what rare numbers are here! Would not one ſwear that "this youngſter had eſpouſed ſome antiquated "Muſe, who had ſued out a divorce on account of impotence from ſome ſuperannuated ſinner; and, having been p—xed "by her former ſpouſe, has got the gout in "her decrepit age, which makes her hobble "ſo damnably." This was the man who would reform a nation ſinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himſelf allowed that Dennis had detected one of thoſe blunders

which are called *bulls*. The firſt edition has this line:

What is this wit—
Where wanted, ſcorn'd; and envied where acquir'd?

"How," ſays the critick, "can wit be *ſcorn'd* "where it is not? Is not this a figure fre-"quently employed in Hibernian land? The "perſon that wants this wit may indeed be "ſcorned, but the ſcorn ſhews the honour "which the contemner has for wit." Of this remark Pope made the proper uſe, by correcting the paſſage.

I have preſerved, I think, all that is reaſonable in Dennis's criticiſm; it remains that juſtice be done to his delicacy. "For his ac-"quaintance (ſays Dennis) he names Mr. "Walſh, who had by no means the quali-"cation which this author reckons abſolutely "neceſſary to a critick, it being very certain "that he was, like this Eſſayer, a very indif-"ferent poet; he loved to be well-dreſſed; "and I remember a little young gentleman "whom Mr. Walſh uſed to take into his "company, as a double foil to his perſon and

" capacity.—Enquire between *Sunninghill* and " *Oakingham* for a young, ſhort, ſquab gen- " tleman, the very bow of the God of Love, " and tell me whether he be a proper author " to make perſonal reflections?—He may " extol the antients, but he has reaſon to " thank the gods that he was born a modern; " for had he been born of Grecian parents, " and his father conſequently had by law had " the abſolute diſpoſal of him, his life had " been no longer than that of one of his " poems, the life of half a day.—Let the " perſon of a gentleman of his parts be ne- " ver ſo contemptible, his inward man is ten " times more ridiculous; it being impoſſible " that his outward form, though it be that " of downright monkey, ſhould differ ſo " much from human ſhape, as his unthink- " ing immaterial part does from human un- " derſtanding." Thus began the hoſtility between Pope and Dennis, which, though it was ſuſpended for a ſhort time, never was appeaſed. Pope ſeems, at firſt, to have attacked him wantonly; but though he always profeſſed to deſpiſe him, he diſcovers, by mentioning him often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of this Eſſay Pope declared that he did not expect the ſale to be quick, becauſe *not one gentleman in ſixty, even of liberal education, could underſtand it.* The gentlemen, and the education of that time, ſeem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentioned a thouſand copies as a numerous impreſſion.

Dennis was not his only cenſurer; the zealous papiſts thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Eraſmus too ſtudiouſly praiſed; but to theſe objections he had not much regard.

The *Eſſay* has been tranſlated into French by *Hamilton*, author of the *Comte de Grammont*, whoſe verſion was never printed, by *Robotham*, ſecretary to the King for Hanover, and by *Reſnel*; and commented by Dr. Warburton, who has diſcovered in it ſuch order and connection as was not perceived by Addiſon, nor, as is ſaid, intended by the author.

Almoſt every poem, conſiſting of precepts, is ſo far arbitrary and immethodical, that many

many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience; for of two or more poſitions, depending upon ſome remote and general principle, there is ſeldom any cogent reaſon why one ſhould precede the other. But for the order in which they ſtand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may eaſily give a reaſon. *It is poſſible*, ſays Hooker, *that by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred.* Of all homogeneous truths at leaſt, of all truths reſpecting the ſame general end, in whatever ſeries they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed, ſuch as, when it is once ſhewn, ſhall appear natural; but if this order be reverſed, another mode of connection equally ſpecious may be found or made. Ariſtotle is praiſed for naming Fortitude firſt of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can ſteadily be practiſed; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed Prudence and Juſtice before it, ſince without Prudence Fortitude is mad; without Juſtice, it is miſchievous.

As the end of method is perſpicuity, that ſeries is ſufficiently regular that avoids ob-

ſcurity; and where there is no obſcurity it will not be difficult to diſcover method.

In the *Spectator* was publiſhed the *Meſſiah*, which he firſt ſubmitted to the peruſal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticiſms.

It is reaſonable to infer, from his Letters, that the verſes on the *Unfortunate Lady* were written about the time when his *Eſſay* was publiſhed. The Lady's name and adventures I have ſought with fruitleſs enquiry.

I can therefore tell no more than I have learned from Mr. Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could truſt his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an unkle, who, having given her a proper education, expected like other guardians that ſhe ſhould make at leaſt an equal match; and ſuch he propoſed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferior condition.

Having diſcovered the correſpondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady

lady determined to abide by her own choice, he ſuppoſed that ſeparation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and ſent her into a foreign country, where ſhe was obliged to converſe only with thoſe from whom her unkle had nothing to fear.

Her lover took care to repeat his vows; but his letters were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with ſtill greater vigilance; till of this reſtraint ſhe grew ſo impatient, that ſhe bribed a woman-ſervant to procure her a ſword, which ſhe directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intention to raiſe the Lady's character, it does not appear that ſhe had any claim to praiſe, nor much to compaſſion. She ſeems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her unkle's power could not have laſted long; the hour of liberty and choice would have come in time. But her deſires were too hot for delay, and ſhe liked ſelf-murder better than ſuſpenſe.

Nor is it diſcovered that the unkle, whoever he was, is with much juſtice delivered

to

to poſterity as a *falſe Guardian*; he ſeems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed; he endeavoured to direct his niece till ſhe ſhould be able to direct herſelf. Poetry has not often been worſe employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not long after, he wrote the *Rape of the Lock*, the moſt airy, the moſt ingenious, and the moſt delightful of all his compoſitions, occaſioned by a frolick of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which Lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether ſtealth or violence, was ſo much reſented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being ſecretary to King James's Queen, had followed his Miſtreſs into France, and as the author of *Sir Solomon Single*, a comedy, and ſome tranſlations, was entitled to the notice of a Wit, ſolicited Pope to endeavour a reconcilation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's requeſt, though his name was for a long time marked only by

the

the firſt and laſt letter, C—l, a poem of two cantos was written (1711), as is ſaid, in a fortnight, and ſent to the offended Lady, who liked it well enough to ſhew it; and, with the uſual proceſs of literary tranſactions, the author, dreading a ſurreptitious edition, was forced to publiſh it.

The event is ſaid to have been ſuch as was deſired; the pacification and diverſion of all to whom it related, except Sir *George Brown*, who complained with ſome bitterneſs that, in the character of *Sir Plume*, he was made to talk nonſenſe. Whether all this be true, I have ſome doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who preſided in an Engliſh Convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an inſult than an honour; and ſhe may be ſuppoſed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its firſt appearance it was termed by Addiſon *merum ſal*. Pope, however, ſaw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the *Roſicrucians*, imparted the ſcheme with

with which his head was teeming to Addiſon, who told him that his work, as it ſtood, was *a delicious little thing*, and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too haſtily conſidered as an inſtance of Addiſon's jealouſy; for as he could not gueſs the conduct of the new deſign, or the poſſibilities of pleaſure comprised in a fiction of which there had been no examples, he might very reaſonably and kindly perſuade the author to acquieſce in his own proſperity, and forbear an attempt which he conſidered as an unneceſſary hazard.

Addiſon's counſel was happily rejected. Pope foreſaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and reſolved to ſpare no art, or induſtry of cultivation. The ſoft luxuriance of his fancy was already ſhooting; and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embelliſh it.

His attempt was juſtified by its ſucceſs. The *Rape of the Lock* ſtands forward, in the claſſes of literature, as the moſt exquiſite example

example of ludicrous poetry. Berkley congratulated him upon the diſplay of powers more truly poetical than he had ſhewn before; with elegance of deſcription and juſtneſs of precepts, he had now exhibited boundleſs fertility of invention.

He always conſidered the intertexture of the machinery with the action as his moſt ſucceſsful exertion of poetical art. He indeed could never afterwards produce any thing of ſuch unexampled excellence. Thoſe performances, which ſtrike with wonder, are combinations of ſkilful genius with happy caſualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the diſcovery of a new race of preternatural agents, ſhould happen twice to the ſame man.

Of this poem the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praiſe for a long time without diſturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis publiſhed ſome remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the publick was already ſettled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticiſm.

About

About this time he publiſhed the *Temple of Fame*, which, as he tells Steele in their correſpondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for ſo much learning and ſo much obſervation as that work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards publiſhed ſome remarks, of which the moſt reaſonable is, that ſome of the lines repreſent *motion* as exhibited by *ſculpture*.

Of the Epiſtle from *Eloiſa to Abelard*, I do not know the date. His firſt inclination to attempt a compoſition of that tender kind aroſe, as Mr. Savage told me, from his peruſal of Prior's *Nut-brown Maid*. How much he has ſurpaſſed Prior's work it is not neceſſary to mention, when perhaps it may be ſaid with juſtice, that he has excelled every compoſition of the ſame kind. The mixture of religious hope and reſignation gives an elevation and dignity to diſappointed love, which images merely natural cannot beſtow. The gloom of a convent ſtrikes the imagination

tion with far greater force than the ſolitude of a grove.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he ſlighted it.

In the next year (1713) he publiſhed *Windſor Foreſt*; of which part was, as he relates, written at ſixteen, about the ſame time as his Paſtorals, and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins, we are not told. The lines relating to the Peace confeſs their own date. It is dedicated to Lord Lanſdowne, who was then high in reputation and influence among the Tories; and it is ſaid that the concluſion of the poem gave great pain to Addiſon, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often ſpread with boldneſs very diſproportionate to their evidence. Why ſhould Addiſon receive any particular diſturbance from the laſt lines of *Windſor Foreſt?* If contrariety of opinion could poiſon a politician, he would not live a day; and, as a poet, he muſt have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

The pain that Addiſon might feel it is not likely that he would confeſs; and it is certain that he ſo well ſuppreſſed his diſcontent, that Pope now thought himſelf his favourite; for having been conſulted in the reviſal of *Cato*, he introduced it by a Prologue; and, when Dennis publiſhed his Remarks, undertook not indeed to vindicate but to revenge his friend, by a *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis*.

There is reaſon to believe that Addiſon gave no encouragement to this diſingenuous hoſtility; for, ſays Pope, in a Letter to him, "indeed your opinion, that 'tis entirely to be "neglected, would be my own in my own "caſe; but I felt more warmth here than I "did when I firſt ſaw his book againſt my-"ſelf (though indeed in two minutes it "made me heartily merry)." Addiſon was not a man on whom ſuch cant of ſenſibility could make much impreſſion. He left the pamphlet to itſelf, having diſowned it to Dennis, and perhaps did not think Pope to have deſerved much by his officiouſneſs.

This

This year was printed in the *Guardian* the ironical compariſon between the Paſtorals of Philips and Pope; a compoſition of artifice, criticiſm, and literature, to which nothing equal will eaſily be found. The ſuperiority of Pope is ſo ingeniouſly diſſembled, and the feeble lines of Philips ſo ſkilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper leſt Pope ſhould be offended. Addiſon immediately ſaw the writer's deſign; and, as it ſeems, had malice enough to conceal his diſcovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a ſtrong inclination to unite the art of Painting with that of Poetry, and put himſelf under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-ſighted, and therefore not formed by nature for a painter: he tried, however, how far he could advance, and ſometimes perſuaded his friends to ſit. A picture of Betterton, ſuppoſed to be drawn by him, was in the poſſeſſion of Lord Mansfield: if this was taken

from the life, he muſt have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced ſome encomiaſtick verſes to Jervas, which certainly ſhew his power as a poet, but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindneſs and eſteem; and after his death publiſhed, under his name, a verſion into modern Engliſh of Chaucer's Prologues, and one of his Tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himſelf by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds, if he would ſhew them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year (1713) produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was ſought as well as praiſe. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffuſed his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of

of any civil employment, and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books *.

He therefore reſolved to try how far the favour of the publick extended, by ſoliciting a ſubſcription to a verſion of the *Iliad*, with large notes.

To print by ſubſcription was, for ſome time, a practice peculiar to the Engliſh. The firſt conſiderable work for which this expedient was employed is ſaid to have been Dryden's *Virgil*; and it had been tried again with great ſucceſs when the *Tatlers* were collected into volumes.

There was reaſon to believe that Pope's attempt would be ſucceſsful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was perſonally known to almoſt all whom dignity of employment or ſplendour of reputation had made eminent; he converſed indifferently with both parties, and never diſturbed the publick with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boaſted its literary zeal, that the great men, who on

* Spence.

other occaſions practiſed all the violence of oppoſition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who had delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With thoſe hopes, he offered an Engliſh *Iliad* to ſubſcribers, in ſix volumes in quarto, for ſix guineas; a ſum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconſiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever aſked before. His propoſal, however, was very favourably received, and the patrons of literature were buſy to recommend his undertaking, and promote his intereſt. Lord Oxford, indeed, lamented that ſuch a genius ſhould be waſted upon a work not original; but propoſed no means by which he might live without it: Addiſon recommended caution and moderation, and adviſed him not to be content with the praiſe of half the nation, when he might be univerſally favoured.

The greatneſs of the deſign, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raiſed ſuch expectations of the

the future ſale, that the bookſellers made their offers with great eagerneſs; but the higheſt bidder was *Bernard Lintot*, who became proprietor on condition of ſupplying, at his own expence, all the copies which were to be delivered to ſubſcribers, or preſented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

Of the Quartos it was, I believe, ſtipulated that none ſhould be printed but for the author, that the ſubſcription might not be depreciated; but Lintot impreſſed the ſame pages upon a ſmall Folio, and paper perhaps a little thinner; and ſold exactly at half the price, for half a guinea each volume, books ſo little inferior to the Quartos, that, by a fraud of trade, thoſe Folios, being afterwards ſhortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were ſold as copies printed for the ſubſcribers.

Lintot printed ſome on royal paper in Folio for two guineas a volume; but of this experiment he repented, and his ſon ſold copies of the firſt volume with all their extent of margin for two ſhillings.

It is unpleaſant to relate that the book-ſeller, after all his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjuſt and illegal action, defrauded of his profit. An edition of the Engliſh *Iliad* was printed in Holland in Duodecimo, and imported clandeſtinely for the gratification of thoſe who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintot was compelled to contract his Folio at once into a Duodecimo, and loſe the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now ſubjoined to the text in the ſame page, and are therefore more eaſily conſulted. Of this edition the ſale was doubtleſs very numerous; but indeed great numbers were neceſſary to produce conſiderable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his propoſals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but in ſome degree that of his friends who patroniſed his ſubſcription, began to be frighted at

at his own undertaking; and finding himſelf at firſt embarraſſed with difficulties, which retarded and oppreſſed him, he was for a time timorous and uneaſy; had his nights diſturbed by dreams of long journeys through unknown ways, and wiſhed, as he ſaid, *that ſomebody would hang him* *.

This miſery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew by degrees more acquainted with Homer's images and expreſſions, and practice increaſed his facility of verſification. In a ſhort time he repreſents himſelf as diſpatching regularly fifty verſes a day, which would ſhew him by an eaſy computation the termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that aſks a ſubſcription ſoon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor, and he that wiſhes to ſave his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addiſon had hinted his ſuſpicion that Pope was too much a Tory; and ſome of the Tories ſuſ-

* Spence.

pected his principles becauſe he had contributed to the *Guardian*, which was carried on by *Steele*.

To thoſe who cenſured his politicks were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in queſtion his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a tranſlator of Homer. To theſe he made no publick oppoſition; but in one of his Letters eſcapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a courſe of life of which much ſeems to have paſſed in converſation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he found himſelf deficient he ſought aſſiſtance; and what man of learning would refuſe to help him? Minute enquiries into the force of words are leſs neceſſary in tranſlating Homer than other poets, becauſe his poſitions are general, and his repreſentations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary cuſtoms, on thoſe changeable ſcenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction,

diction, and obſcurity in books. To this open diſplay of unadulterated nature it muſt be aſcribed, that Homer has fewer paſſages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curioſity with the Latin printed on the oppoſite page, declared that from the rude ſimplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majeſty than from the laboured elegance of poliſhed verſions.

Thoſe literal tranſlations were always at hand, and from them he could always obtain his author's ſenſe with ſufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very ſmall of thoſe who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the muſick of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical tranſlation of *Eobanus Heſſus*, an unwearied writer of Latin verſes; he had the French Homers of *La Valterie* and *Dacier*, and the Engliſh of *Chapman*, *Hobbes*, and *Ogylby*.

Ogylby. With Chapman, whoſe work, though now totally neglected, ſeems to have been popular almoſt to the end of the laſt century, he had very frequent conſultations, and perhaps never tranſlated any paſſage till he had read his verſion, which indeed he has been ſometimes ſuſpected of uſing inſtead of the original.

Notes were likewiſe to be provided; for the ſix volumes would have been very little more than ſix pamphlets without them. What the mere peruſal of the text could ſuggeſt, Pope wanted no aſſiſtance to collect or methodize; but more was neceſſary; many pages were to be filled, and learning muſt ſupply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was acceſſible to common readers. Euſtathius was therefore neceſſarily conſulted. To read Euſtathius, of whoſe work there was then no Latin verſion, I ſuſpect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; ſome other was therefore to be found, who had leiſure as well as abilities, and he was doubtleſs moſt readily

ly employed who would do much work for little money.

The hiſtory of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himſelf the commentator *in part upon the Iliad*; and it appears from Fenton's Letter, preſerved in the Muſeum, that Broome was at firſt engaged in conſulting Euſtathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reaſon, he deſiſted: another man of Cambridge was then employed, who ſoon grew weary of the work; and a third was recommended by *Thirlby*, who is now diſcovered to have been *Jortin*, a man ſince well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never teſtified any curioſity to ſee him. The terms which Fenton uſes are very mercantile: *I think at firſt ſight that his performance is very commendable, and have ſent word for him to finiſh the 17th book, and to ſend it with his demands for his trouble. I have here encloſed the ſpecimen; if the reſt come before the return, I will keep them till I receive your order.*

Broome then offered his ſervice a ſecond time, which was probably accepted, as they had

had afterwards a cloſer correſpondence. Parnell contributed the Life of Homer, which Pope found ſo harſh, that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with ſuch help as kindneſs or money could procure him, in ſomewhat more than five years he completed his verſion of the *Iliad*, with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year, and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him tranſlating fifty lines a day, it is natural to ſuppoſe that he would have brought his work to a more ſpeedy concluſion. The *Iliad*, containing leſs than ſixteen thouſand verſes, might have been deſpatched in leſs than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verſes in a day. The notes, compiled with the aſſiſtance of his mercenaries, could not be ſuppoſed to require more time than the text. According to this calculation, the progreſs of Pope may ſeem to have been ſlow; but the diſtance is commonly very great between actual performances and ſpeculative poſſibility. It is natural to ſuppoſe, that as much as has been done to-day may be done to-morrow; but on the morrow

ſome

ſome difficulty emerges, or ſome external impediment obſtructs. Indolence, interruption, buſineſs, and pleaſure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thouſand cauſes that can, and ten thouſand that cannot, be recounted. Perhaps no extenſive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs againſt Time, has an antagoniſt not ſubject to caſualties.

The encouragement given to this tranſlation, though report ſeems to have over-rated it, was ſuch as the world has not often ſeen. The ſubſcribers were five hundred and ſeventy-five. The copies, for which ſubſcriptions were given, were ſix hundred and fifty-four. For thoſe copies Pope had nothing to pay; he therefore received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thouſand three hundred and twenty pounds four ſhillings, without deduction, as the books were ſupplied by Lintot.

By the ſucceſs of his ſubſcription Pope was relieved from thoſe pecuniary diſtreſſes with which,

which, notwithſtanding his popularity, he had hitherto ſtruggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his diſqualification for publick employment, but never propoſed a penſion. While the tranſlation of *Homer* was in its progreſs, Mr. Craggs, then ſecretary of ſtate, offered to procure him a penſion, which, at leaſt during his miniſtry, might be enjoyed with ſecrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that, if he ſhould be preſſed with want of money, he would ſend to him for occaſional ſupplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never ſolicited for money by Pope, who diſdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this ſubſcription, which he had too much diſcretion to ſquander, he ſecured his future life from want, by conſiderable annuities. The eſtate of the Duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year, payable to Pope, which doubtleſs his tranſlation enabled him to purchaſe.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curioſity, that I deduce thus minutely the hiſtory of the Engliſh

Engliſh *Iliad.* It is certainly the nobleſt verſion of poetry which the world has ever ſeen; and its publication muſt therefore be conſidered as one of the great events in the annals of Learning.

To thoſe who have ſkill to eſtimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it muſt be very deſirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctneſs. Of ſuch an intellectual proceſs the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but happily there remains the original copy of the *Iliad*, which, being obtained by Bolingbroke as a curioſity, deſcended from him to Mallet, and is now by the ſolicitation of the late Dr. Maty repoſited in the Muſeum.

Between this manuſcript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there muſt have been an intermediate copy, that was perhaps deſtroyed as it returned from the preſs.

From the firſt copy I have procured a few tranſcripts, and ſhall exhibit firſt the printed

lines; then, in a ſmaller print, thoſe of the manuſcripts, with all their variations. Thoſe words in the ſmall print which are given in Italicks, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their ſtead.

The beginning of the firſt book ſtands thus:

The wrath of Peleus' ſon, the direful ſpring
Of all the Grecian woes, O Goddeſs, ſing;
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
The ſouls of mighty chiefs untimely ſlain.

The ſtern Pelides' *rage*, O Goddeſs, ſing,
wrath
Of all the woes *of Greece* the fatal ſpring,
Grecian
That ſtrew'd with *warriors* dead the Phrygian plain,
heroes
And *peopled the dark hell with heroes* ſlain;
fill'd the ſhady hell with chiefs untimely

Whoſe limbs, unburied on the naked ſhore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,
Since great Achilles and Atrides ſtrove;
Such was the ſovereign doom, and ſuch the will
of Jove.

Whoſe limbs, unburied on the hoſtile ſhore,
Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,
Since firſt *Atrides* and *Achilles* ſtrove;
Such was the ſovereign doom, and ſuch the will of Jove.

Declare,

Declare, O Muſe, in what ill-fated hour
Sprung the fierce ſtrife, from what offended Power!
Latona's ſon a dire contagion ſpread,
And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead;
The King of Men his reverend prieſt defy'd,
And for the King's offence the people dy'd.

Declare, O Goddeſs, what offended Power
Enflam'd their *rage*, in that *ill-omen'd* hour;
anger fatal, hapleſs
Phœbus himſelf the *dire* debate procur'd,
fierce
T' avenge the wrongs his injur'd prieſt endur'd;
For this the God a dire infection ſpread,
And heap'd the camp with millions of the dead:
The King of Men the ſacred Sire defy'd,
And for the King's offence the people dy'd.

For Chryſes ſought with coſtly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the Victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable Father ſtands,
Apollo's awful enſigns grace his hands,
By theſe he begs, and, lowly bending down,
Extends the ſceptre and the laurel crown.

For Chryſes fought by *preſents to regain*
coſtly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the Victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable Father ſtands,
Apollo's awful enſigns grac'd his hands,
By theſe he begs, and lowly bending down
The golden ſceptre and the laurel crown,
Preſents the ſceptre

For theſe as enſigns of his God he bare,
The God that ſends his golden ſhafts afar;
The low on earth, the venerable man,
Suppliant before the brother kings began.

He ſued to all, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race;
Ye kings and warriors, may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
May Jove reſtore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleaſures of your native ſhore.

To all he ſued, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race:
Ye *ſons of Atreus*, may your vows be crown'd,
Kings and warriors
Your labours, by the Gods be all your labours crown'd
So may the Gods your arms with conqueſt bleſs,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
Till laid
And crown your labours with deſir'd ſucceſs;
May Jove reſtore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleaſures of your native ſhore.

But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryſeis to theſe arms again;
If mercy fail, yet let my preſent move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, ſon of Jove.

But, oh! relieve a hapleſs parent's pain,
And give my daughter to theſe arms again;
Receive my gifts; if mercy fails, yet let my preſent move;
And fear *the God that deals his darts around,*
avenging Phœbus, ſon of Jove.

The

The Greeks, in ſhouts, their joint aſſent declare
The prieſt to reverence, and releaſe the fair.
Not ſo Atrides; he, with kingly pride,
Repuls'd the ſacred Sire, and thus reply'd.

He ſaid, the Greeks their joint aſſent declare,
The father ſaid, the gen'rous Greeks relent,
T' accept the ranſom, and releaſe the fair:
Revere the prieſt, and ſpeak their joint aſſent:
Not ſo *the tyrant*, he, with kingly pride,
Atrides
Repuls'd the ſacred Sire, and thus reply'd.
[Not ſo, the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of theſe lines, and of the whole firſt book, I am told that there was yet a former copy, more varied, and more deformed with interlineations.

The beginning of the ſecond book varies very little from the printed page, and is therefore ſet down without any parallel; the few ſlight differences do not require to be elaborately diſplayed.

Now pleaſing ſleep had ſeal'd each mortal eye;
Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders lie;
Th' Immortals ſlumber'd on their thrones above,
All but the ever-watchful eye of Jove.
To honour Thetis' ſon he bends his care,
And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war.

Then bids an empty phantom riſe to fight;
And thus *commands* the viſion of the night:
directs
Fly hence, deluſive dream, and, light as air,
To Agamemnon's royal tent repair;
Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled train,
March all his legions to the duſty plain.
Now tell the King 'tis given him to deſtroy
Declare ev'n now
The lofty *walls* of wide-extended Troy;
towers
For now no more the Gods with Fate contend;
At Juno's ſuit the heavenly factions end.
Deſtruction *hovers* o'er yon devoted wall,
hangs
And nodding Ilium waits th' impending fall.

Invocation to the Catalogue of Ships.

Say, Virgins, ſeated round the throne divine,
All-knowing Goddeſſes! immortal Nine!
Since earth's wide regions, heaven's unmeaſur'd
height,
And hell's abyſs, hide nothing from your ſight,
(We, wretched mortals! loſt in doubts below,
But gueſs by rumour, and but boaſt we know)
Oh ſay what heroes, fir'd by thirſt of fame,
Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's deſtruction came!
To count them all, demands a thouſand tongues,
A throat of braſs and adamantine lungs.

Now, Virgin Goddeſſes, immortal Nine!
That round Olympus' heavenly ſummit ſhine,
Who ſee through heaven and earth, and hell profound,
And all things know, and all things can reſound;
Relate what armies fought the Trojan land,
What nations follow'd, and what chiefs command;
(For doubtful Fame diſtracts mankind below,
And nothing can we tell, and nothing know)
Without your aid, to count th' unnumber'd train,
A thouſand mouths, a thouſand tongues were vain.

Book V. *v.* 1.

But Pallas now Tydides' ſoul inſpires,
Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires:
Above the Greeks his deathleſs fame to raiſe,
And crown her hero with diſtinguiſh'd praiſe,
High on his helm celeſtial lightnings play,
His beamy ſhield emits a living ray;
Th' unwearied blaze inceſſant ſtreams ſupplies,
Like the red ſtar that fires th' autumnal ſkies.

But Pallas now Tydides' ſoul inſpires,
Fills with her *rage*, and warms with all her fires;
force
O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raiſe,
Above the Greeks *her warrior's* fame to raiſe,
his deathleſs
And crown her hero with *immortal* praiſe:
diſtinguiſh'd
Bright from his beamy *creſt* the lightnings play,
High on helm
From his broad buckler flaſh'd the living ray,
High on his helm celeſtial lightnings play,
His beamy ſhield emits a living ray.

The Goddeſs with her breath the flame ſupplies,
Bright as the ſtar whoſe fires in Autumn riſe;
Her breath divine thick ſtreaming flames ſupplies,
Bright as the ſtar that fires th' autumnal ſkies:
Th' unwearied blaze inceſſant ſtreams ſupplies,
Like the red ſtar that fires th' autumnal ſkies.

When firſt he rears his radiant orb to fight,
And bath'd in ocean ſhoots a keener light.
Such glories Pallas on the chief beſtow'd,
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd
Onward ſhe drives him furious to engage,
Where the fight burns, and where the thickeſt rage.

When freſh he rears his radiant orb to fight,
And gilds old Ocean with a blaze of light,
Bright as the ſtar that fires th' autumnal ſkies,
Freſh from the deep, and gilds the ſeas and ſkies,
Such glories Pallas on her chief beſtow'd,
Such ſparkling rays from his bright armour flow'd
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd,
Onward ſhe drives him *headlong* to engage,
furious
Where the *war bleeds*, and where the *fierceſt* rage.
fight burns thickeſt

The ſons of Dares firſt the combat ſought,
A wealthy prieſt, but rich without a fault;
In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led,
The ſons to toils of glorious battle bred;

There liv'd a Trojan—Dares was his name,
The prieſt of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame;

The

The ſons of Dares firſt the combat fought,
A wealthy prieſt, but rich without a fault.

Concluſion of Book VIII. *v.* 687.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver every mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales—the rocks in proſpect riſe,
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The long reflexion of the diſtant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the ſpires:
A thouſand piles the duſky horrors gild,
And ſhoot a ſhady luſtre o'er the field;
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whoſe umber'd arms by fits thick flaſhes ſend;
Loud neigh the courſers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the riſing morn.

As when in ſtillneſs of the ſilent night,
As when the moon in all her luſtre bright,

As when the moon refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's *clear* azure *ſheds* her *ſilver* light;
pure ſpreads ſacred
As ſtill in air the trembling luſtre ſtood,
And o'er its golden border ſhoots a flood;
When *no looſe gale* diſturbs the deep ſerene,
not a breath
And *no dim* cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene;
not a
Around her ſilver throne the planets glow,
And ſtars unnumber'd trembling beams beſtow
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are ſeen,
o'er the dark trees a yellow ſheds,
O'er the dark trees a yellower *green* they ſhed,
gleam
verdure
And tip with ſilver all the *mountain* heads:
foreſt
And tip with ſilver every mountain's head.
The vallies open, and the foreſts riſe,
The vales appear, the rocks in proſpect riſe,
Then ſhine the vales, the rocks in proſpect riſe,
All Nature ſtands reveal'd before our eyes;
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies.
The conſcious ſhepherd, joyful at the ſight,
Eyes the blue vault, and numbers every light.
The conſcious *ſwains rejoicing at the* ſight,
ſhepherds gazing with delight
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the *vivid* light,
glorious
uſeful
So many flames before *the navy* blaze,
proud Ilion
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays,
Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams,
And tip the diſtant ſpires with fainter beams;

The

The long reflexions of the diſtant fires
Gild the high walls, and tremble on the ſpires,
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the ſpires;
A thouſand fires at diſtant ſtations bright,
Gild the dark proſpect, and diſpel the night.

Of theſe ſpecimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeneſs of its firſt conceptions to the elegance of its laſt, will naturally deſire a greater number; but moſt other readers are already tired, and I am not writing only to poets and philoſophers.

The *Iliad* was publiſhed volume by volume, as the tranſlation proceeded; the firſt four books appeared in 1715. The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name with criticiſm, or poetry, was deſirous of ſuch intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topick. Halifax, who, by having been firſt a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear ſome books while they were yet unpubliſhed. Of this rehearſal Pope afterwards gave the following account *.

* Spence.

The

" The famous Lord Halifax was rather a
" pretender to taſte than really poſſeſſed of
" it.—When I had finiſhed the two or three
" firſt books of my tranſlation of the *Iliad*,
" that Lord deſired to have the pleaſure of
" hearing them read at his houſe.—Addiſon,
" Congreve, and Garth, were there at the
" reading. In four or five places, Lord
" Halifax ſtopt me very civilly, and with a
" ſpeech each time, much of the ſame kind, 'I
" beg your pardon, Mr. Pope; but there is
" ſomething in that paſſage that does not
" quite pleaſe me.—Be ſo good as to mark the
" place, and conſider it a little at your leiſure.
" —I'm ſure you can give it a little turn.'
" I returned from Lord Halifax's with Dr.
" Garth, in his chariot; and, as we were
" going along, was ſaying to the Doctor, that
" my Lord had laid me under a good deal
" of difficulty by ſuch looſe and general ob-
" ſervations; that I had been thinking over
" the paſſages almoſt ever ſince, and could
" not gueſs at what it was that offended his
" Lordſhip in either of them. Garth laughed
" heartily at my embarraſſment; ſaid, I had
" not been long enough acquainted with Lord

" Halifax

" Halifax to know his way yet; that I need
" not puzzle myſelf about looking thoſe places
" over and over, when I got home. 'All you
" need do (ſays he) is to leave them juſt as
" they are; call on Lord Halifax two or three
" months hence, thank him for his kind ob-
" ſervations on thoſe paſſages, and then read
" them to him as altered. I have known him
" much longer than you have, and will be
" anſwerable for the event.' I followed his
" advice; waited on Lord Halifax ſome time
" after; ſaid, I hoped he would find his ob-
" jections to thoſe paſſages removed; read
" them to him exactly as they were at firſt:
" and his Lordſhip was extremely pleaſed
" with them, and cried out, *Ay, now they*
" *are perfectly right: nothing can be better.*"

It is ſeldom that the great or the wiſe ſuſpect that they are deſpiſed or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of ſecuring immortality, made ſome advances of favour and ſome overtures of advantage to Pope, which he ſeems to have received with ſullen coldneſs. All our knowledge of this tranſaction is derived from a ſingle Letter (Dec. 1, 1714), in which Pope ſays, " I am obliged to
" you,

" you, both for the favours you have done
" me, and thoſe you intend me. I diſtruſt
" neither your will nor your memory, when
" it is to do good; and if I ever become trou-
" bleſome or ſolicitous, it muſt not be out
" of expectation, but out of gratitude. Your
" Lordſhip may cauſe me to live agreeably in
" the town, or contentedly in the country,
" which is really all the difference I ſet be-
" tween an eaſy fortune and a ſmall one. It
" is indeed a high ſtrain of generoſity in you
" to think of making me eaſy all my life,
" only becauſe I have been ſo happy as to di-
" vert you ſome few hours; but, if I may
" have leave to add it is becauſe you think
" me no enemy to my native country, there
" will appear a better reaſon; for I muſt of
" conſequence be very much (as I ſincerely
" am) yours &c."

Theſe voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accuſtomed to ſuch frigid gratitude, and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were ſuſpicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he ſaw at what rate his praiſe was valued;

valued; he would be *troubleſome out of gratitude, not expectation.* Halifax thought himſelf entitled to confidence, and would give nothing, unleſs he knew what he ſhould receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praiſe on one ſide, and of money on the other, and ended becauſe Pope was leſs eager of money than Halifax of praiſe. It is not likely that Halifax had any perſonal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with ſcorn and hatred.

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addiſon and he were now at the head of poetry and criticiſm; and both in ſuch a ſtate of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman ſtate, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a ſuperior. Of the gradual abatement of kindneſs between friends, the beginning is often ſcarcely diſcernible by themſelves, and the proceſs is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities ſometimes peeviſhly returned, and ſometimes contemptuouſly neglected, which would eſcape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of reſentment.

ment. That the quarrel of thoſe two wits ſhould be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer ſays, *nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no perſonal knowledge.*

Pope doubtleſs approached Addiſon, when the reputation of their wit firſt brought them together, with the reſpect due to a man whoſe abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himſelf aſpiring, had in his hands the diſtribution of literary fame. He paid court with ſufficient diligence by his Prologue to *Cato*, by his abuſe of Dennis, and, with praiſe yet more direct, by his poem on the *Dialogues on Medals*, of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocriſy; for he confeſſed that he found in Addiſon ſomething more pleaſing than in any other man.

It may be ſuppoſed, that as Pope ſaw himſelf favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with thoſe of others, his confidence increaſed, and his ſubmiſſion leſſened; and that Addiſon felt no

no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might ſoon contend with him for the higheſt place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatneſs, has among his friends thoſe who officiouſly, or inſidiouſly, quicken his attention to offences, heighten his diſguſt, and ſtimulate his reſentment. Of ſuch adherents Addiſon doubtleſs had many, and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emiſſion and reception of the Propoſals for the *Iliad*, the kindneſs of Addiſon ſeems to have abated. Jervas the painter once pleaſed himſelf (Aug. 20, 1714) with imagining that he had re-eſtabliſhed their friendſhip; and wrote to Pope that Addiſon once ſuſpected him of too cloſe a confederacy with Swift, but was now ſatisfied with his conduct. To this Pope anſwered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were ſuch as his ſervices in regard to the ſubſcription demanded, and that the Tories never put him under the neceſſity of aſking leave to be grateful. *But*, ſays he, *as Mr. Addiſon muſt be* the judge *in what regards himſelf, and ſeems to have no very juſt one in regard to me, ſo I muſt own to you I expect nothing but*

civility from him. In the ſame Letter he mentions Philips, as having been buſy to kindle animoſity between them; but, in a Letter to Addiſon, he expreſſes ſome conſciouſneſs of behaviour, inattentively deficient in reſpect.

Of Swift's induſtry in promoting the ſubſcription there remains the teſtimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

"Nov. 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into the "coffee-houſe, and had a bow from every "body but me, who, I confeſs, could not "but deſpiſe him. When I came to the anti-"chamber to wait, before prayers, Dr. Swift "was the principal man of talk and buſineſs, "and acted as maſter of requeſts.—Then he "inſtructed a young nobleman that the *beſt* "*Poet in England* was *Mr. Pope* (a papiſt), "who had begun a tranſlation of *Homer* "into Engliſh verſe, for which *he muſt have* "*them all ſubſcribe*; for, ſays he, the author "*ſhall not* begin to print till *I have* a thou-"ſand guineas for him."

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and

and officious, procured an interview between theſe angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occaſion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint with frankneſs and ſpirit, as a man undeſervedly neglected or oppoſed; and Addiſon affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity, and, telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and thoſe of Steele, ſaid, that he, being now engaged in publick buſineſs, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation; nor had any other deſire, with regard to Pope, than that his ſhould not, by too much arrogance, alienate the publick.

To this Pope is ſaid to have replied with great keenneſs and ſeverity, upbraiding Addiſon with perpetual dependance, and with the abuſe of thoſe qualifications which he had obtained at the publick coſt, and charging him with mean endeavours to obſtruct the progreſs of riſing merit. The conteſt roſe ſo high, that they parted at laſt without any interchange of civility.

The firſt volume of *Homer* was (1715) in time publiſhed; and a rival verſion of the firſt *Iliad*, for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was ſoon perceived that, among the followers of Addiſon, Tickell had the preference, and the criticks and poets divided into factions. *I*, ſays Pope, *have the town, that is, the mob, on my ſide; but it is not uncommon for the ſmaller party to ſupply by induſtry what it wants in numbers.—I appeal to the people as my rightful judges, and, while they are not inclined to condemn me, ſhall not fear the high-flyers at Button's.* This oppoſition he immediately imputed to Addiſon, and complained of it in terms ſufficiently reſentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addiſon's opinion was aſked, he declared the verſions to be both good, but Tickell's the beſt that ever had been written; and ſometimes ſaid that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of *Homer*.

Pope was now ſufficiently irritated; his reputation and his intereſt were at hazard. He once

once intended to print together the four verſions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared, and fairly eſtimated. This deſign ſeems to have been defeated by the refuſal of Tonſon, who was the proprietor of the other three verſions.

Pope intended at another time a rigorous criticiſm of Tickell's tranſlation, and had marked a copy, which I have ſeen, in all places that appeared defective. But while he was thus meditating defence or revenge, his adverſary ſunk before him without a blow; the voice of the publick was not long ſuſpended, and the preference was univerſally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumſtance to another, that the other tranſlation was the work of Addiſon himſelf; but if he knew it in Addiſon's life-time, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illuſtrious antagoniſt to be puniſhed by what has been conſidered as the moſt painful of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The other circumſtances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope *.

" Philips ſeemed to have been encouraged " to abuſe me in coffee-houſes, and conver- " ſations: and Gildon wrote a thing about " Wycherley, in which he had abuſed both " me and my relations very groſly. Lord " Warwick himſelf told me one day, that it " was in vain for me to endeavour to be well " with Mr. Addiſon; that his jealous temper " would never admit of a ſettled friendſhip " between us: and, to convince me of what " he had ſaid, aſſured me, that Addiſon had " encouraged Gildon to publiſh thoſe ſcan- " dals, and had given him ten guineas after " they were publiſhed. The next day, while " I was heated with what I had heard, I " wrote a Letter to Mr. Addiſon, to let him " know that I was not unacquainted with this " behaviour of his; that if I was to ſpeak " ſeverely of him, in return for it, it ſhould " be in ſuch a dirty way, that I ſhould rather " tell him, himſelf, fairly of his faults, and " allow his good qualities; and that it ſhould

* Spence.

" be

" be ſomething in the following manner: I " then adjoined the firſt ſketch of what has " ſince been called my ſatire on Addiſon. " Mr. Addiſon uſed me very civilly ever " after."

The verſes on Addiſon, when they were ſent to Atterbury, were conſidered by him as the moſt excellent of Pope's performances; and the writer was adviſed, ſince he knew where his ſtrength lay, not to ſuffer it to remain unemployed.

This year (1715) being, by the ſubſcription, enabled to live more by choice, having perſuaded his father to ſell their eſtate at Binfield, he purchaſed, I think only for his life, that houſe at Twickenham to which his reſidence afterwards procured ſo much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother.

Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his verſes mention; and being under the neceſſity of making a ſubterraneous paſſage to a garden on the other ſide of the road, he adorned it with foſſile bodies, and dignified

it with the title of a grotto; a place of ſilence and retreat, from which he endeavoured to perſuade his friends and himſelf that cares and paſſions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wiſh or pleaſure of an Engliſhman, who has more frequent need to ſolicit than exclude the ſun; but Pope's excavation was requiſite as an entrance to his garden, and, as ſome men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where neceſſity enforced a paſſage. It may be frequently remarked of the ſtudious and ſpeculative, that they are proud of trifles, and that their amuſements ſeem frivolous and childiſh; whether it be that men conſcious of great reputation think themſelves above the reach of cenſure, and ſafe in the admiſſion of negligent indulgences, or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatneſs, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder, like him who having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, ſhould lament that ſhe ever deſcended to a perch.

While

While the volumes of his *Homer* were annually publiſhed, he collected his former works (1717) into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a Preface, written with great ſpritelineſs and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with ſome paſſages ſubjoined that he at firſt omitted; other marginal additions of the ſame kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets loſe half their praiſe, becauſe the reader knows not what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour both of what he had publiſhed, and of what he had ſuppreſſed.

In this year his father died ſuddenly, in his ſeventy-fifth year, having paſſed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his ſon has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himſelf, he had traded very ſucceſsfully in times when ſudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the *Iliad* was at laſt completed in 1720. The ſplendor and ſuc-

ceſs of this work raiſed Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities; Burnet, who was afterwards a Judge of no mean reputation, cenſured him in a piece called *Homerides* before it was publiſhed; Ducket likewiſe endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual perſecutor of all his ſtudies. But, whoever his criticks were, their writings are loſt, and the names which are preſerved, are preſerved in the *Dunciad*.

In this diſaſtrous year (1720) of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boaſt were expected from the South Sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was ſeized with the univerſal paſſion, and ventured ſome of his money. The ſtock roſe in its price; and he for a while thought himſelf *the Lord of thouſands*. But this dream of happineſs did not laſt long, and he ſeems to have waked ſoon enough to get clear with the loſs only of what he once thought himſelf to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he publiſhed ſome ſelect poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant Dedi-

Dedication to the Earl of Oxford; who, after all his ſtruggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, ſtill under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleaſure in hearing his praiſe.

He gave the ſame year (1721) an edition of *Shakſpeare*. His name was now of ſo much authority, that Tonſon thought himſelf entitled, by annexing it, to demand a ſubſcription of ſix guineas for Shakſpeare's plays in ſix quarto volumes; nor did his expectation much deceive him; for of ſeven hundred and fifty which he printed, he diſperſed a great number at the price propoſed. The reputation of that edition indeed ſunk afterwards ſo low, that one hundred and forty copies were ſold at ſixteen ſhillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and ſeventeen pounds twelve ſhillings, he ſeems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very ſlender powers, firſt, in a book called *Shakeſpeare Reſtored*, and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies

with

with all the inſolence of victory; and, as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be ſupplied, by the deſire of humbling a haughty character.

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collaters, commentators, and verbal criticks; and hoped to perſuade the world, that he miſcarried in this undertaking only by having a mind too great for ſuch minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praiſe. He was the firſt that knew, at leaſt the firſt that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inſpected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his Preface he expanded with great ſkill and elegance the character which had been given of Shakſpeare by Dryden; and he drew the publick attention upon his works, which though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon

Soon after the appearance of the *Iliad*, reſolving not to let the general kindneſs cool, he publiſhed propoſals for a tranſlation of the *Odyſſey*, in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have aſſociates in his labour, being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals.

In the patent, inſtead of ſaying that he had *tranſlated* the *Odyſſey*, as he had ſaid of the *Iliad*, he ſays that he had *undertaken* a tranſlation; and in the propoſals the ſubſcription is ſaid to be not ſolely for his own uſe, but for that of *two of his friends who have aſſiſted him in this work*.

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new verſion, he appeared before the Lords at the memorable trial of Biſhop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity, and frequent correſpondence. Atterbury had honeſtly recommended to him the ſtudy of the

the popiſh controverſy, in hope of his converſion; to which Pope anſwered, in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles, or his judgement. In queſtions and projects of learning, they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account of Atterbury's domeſtick life, and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in thoſe few he made ſeveral blunders.

His Letters to Atterbury expreſs the utmoſt eſteem, tenderneſs, and gratitude: *perhaps*, ſays he, *it is not only in this world that I may have cauſe to remember the Biſhop of Rocheſter.* At their laſt interview in the Tower, Atterbury preſented him with a Bible.

Of the *Odyſſey* Pope tranſlated only twelve books; the reſt were the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The Publick was carefully kept ignorant of the ſeveral ſhares; and an account was ſubjoined at the concluſion, which is now known not to be true.

The

The firſt copy of Pope's books, with thoſe of Fenton, are to be ſeen in the Muſeum. The parts of Pope are leſs interlined than the *Iliad*, and the latter books of the *Iliad* leſs than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every ſheet enabled him to write the next with more facility. The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Thoſe of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the ſame as for the *Iliad*, except that only one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of ſubſcribers was five hundred and ſeventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; ſo that his profit, when he had paid his aſſiſtants, was ſtill very conſiderable. The work was finiſhed in 1725, and from that time he reſolved to make no more tranſlations.

The ſale did not anſwer Lintot's expectation, and he then pretended to diſcover ſome-

thing of fraud in Pope, and commenced, or threatened, a ſuit in Chancery.

On the Engliſh *Odyſſey* a criticiſm was publiſhed by Spence, at that time Profeſſor of Poetry at Oxford; a man whoſe learning was not very great, and whoſe mind was not very powerful. His criticiſm, however, was commonly juſt; what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolneſs and candour. In him Pope had the firſt experience of a critick without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to diſplay beauties as expoſe faults; who cenſured with reſpect, and praiſed with alacrity.

With this criticiſm Pope was ſo little offended, that he ſought the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him from that time in great familiarity, attended him in his laſt hours, and compiled memorials of his converſation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful, and he obtained very valuable preferments in the Church.

Not

Not long after Pope was returning home from a viſit in a friend's coach, which, in paſſing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were cloſed, and being unable to force them open, he was in danger of immediate death, when the poſtilion ſnatched him out by breaking the glaſs, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in ſuch a manner, that he loſt their uſe.

Voltaire, who was then in England, ſent him a letter of Conſolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with ſo much groſſneſs that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope diſcovered, by a trick, that he was a ſpy for the Court, and never conſidered him as a man worthy of confidence.

He ſoon afterwards (1727) joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publiſh three volumes of Miſcellanies, in which amongſt other things he inſerted the *Memoirs of a Pariſh Clerk*, in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own Hiſtory, and a *Debate upon Black and White Horſes*, written in all the formalities of a legal proceſs by the aſſiſtance,

as is ſaid, of Mr. Forteſcue, afterwards Maſter of the Rolls. Before theſe Miſcellanies is a preface ſigned by Swift and Pope, but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous and romantick complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandeſtine ſeizure and ſale of their papers. He tells, in tragick ſtrains, how *the cabinets of the Sick and the cloſets of the Dead have been broke open and ranſacked*; as if thoſe violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treaſures; as if epigrams and eſſays were in danger where gold and diamonds are ſafe. A cat, hunted for his muſk, is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by booksellers.

His complaint, however, received ſome atteſtation; for the ſame year the Letters written by him to Mr. Cromwell, in his youth, were ſold by Mrs. Thomas to Curll, who printed them.

In theſe Miſcellanies was firſt publiſhed the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, which, by ſuch a train

train of conſequences as uſually paſſes in literary quarrels, gave in a ſhort time, according to Pope's account, occaſion to the *Dunciad*.

In the following year (1728) he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and ſhewed his ſatirical powers by publiſhing the *Dunciad*, one of his greateſt and moſt elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to ſink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and ſome others whom he thought unable to defend themſelves.

At the head of the Dunces he placed poor Theobald, whom he accuſed of ingratitude; but whoſe real crime was ſuppoſed to be that of having reviſed *Shakeſpeare* more happily than himſelf. This ſatire had the effect which he intended, by blaſting the characters which it touched. Ralph, who, unneceſſarily interpoſing in the quarrel, got a place in a ſubſequent edition, complained that for a time he was in danger of ſtarving, as the booksellers had no longer any confidence in his capacity.

The prevalence of this poem was gradual and ſlow: the plan, if not wholly new, was little underſtood by common readers. Many of the alluſions required illuſtration; the names were often expreſſed only by the initial and final letters, and, if they had been printed at length, were ſuch as few had known or recollected. The ſubject itſelf had nothing generally intereſting, for whom did it concern to know that one or another ſcribbler was a dunce? If therefore it had been poſſible for thoſe who were attacked to conceal their pain and their reſentment, the *Dunciad* might have made its way very ſlowly in the world.

This, however, was not to be expected: every man is of importance to himſelf, and therefore, in his own opinion, to others; and, ſuppoſing the world already acquainted with all his pleaſures and his pains, is perhaps the firſt to publiſh injuries or misfortunes, which had never been known unleſs related by himſelf, and at which thoſe that hear them will only laugh; for no man ſympathiſes with the ſorrows of vanity.

The

The hiſtory of the *Dunciad* is very minutely related by Pope himſelf, in a Dedication which he wrote to Lord Middleſex in the name of Savage.

" I will relate the war of the *Dunces* (for " ſo it has been commonly called), which be- " gan in the year 1727, and ended in 1730.

" When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope thought " it proper, for reaſons ſpecified in the Pre- " face to their Miſcellanies, to publiſh ſuch " little pieces of theirs as had caſually got " abroad, there was added to them the *Trea-* " *tiſe of the Bathos*, or the *Art of Sinking in* " *Poetry*. It happened that in one chapter " of this piece the ſeveral ſpecies of bad po- " ets were ranged in claſſes, to which were " prefixed almoſt all the letters of the alpha- " bet (the greateſt part of them at random); " but ſuch was the number of poets emi- " nent in that art, that ſome one or other " took every letter to himſelf: all fell into " ſo violent a fury, that, for half a year or " more, the common newſpapers (in moſt " of which they had ſome property, as being

" hired writers) were filled with the moſt
" abuſive falſhoods and ſcurrilities they could
" poſſibly deviſe. A liberty no way to be
" wondered at in thoſe people, and in thoſe
" papers, that for many years, during the
" uncontrouled licenſe of the preſs, had af-
" perſed almoſt all the great characters of the
" age; and this with impunity, their own
" perſons and names being utterly ſecret and
" obſcure.

" This gave Mr. Pope the thought, that
" he had now ſome opportunity of doing
" good, by detecting and dragging into light
" theſe common enemies of mankind; ſince,
" to invalidate this univerſal ſlander, it ſuf-
" ficed to ſhew what contemptible men were
" the authors of it. He was not without
" hopes, that, by manifeſting the dulneſs
" of thoſe who had only malice to recom-
" mend them, either the bookſellers would
" not find their account in employing them,
" or the men themſelves, when diſcovered,
" want courage to proceed in ſo unlawful an
" occupation. This it was that gave birth
" to the *Dunciad*; and he thought it an
" happineſs, that, by the late flood of ſlander

" on

on himſelf, he had acquired ſuch a peculiar right over their names as was neceſſary to this deſign.

"On the 12th of March, 1729, at St. "James's, that poem was preſented to the "King and Queen (who had before been "pleaſed to read it) by the right honourable "Sir Robert Walpole: and ſome days after "the whole impreſſion was taken and diſperſed "by ſeveral noblemen and perſons of the "firſt diſtinction.

"It is certainly a true obſervation, that no "people are ſo impatient of cenſure as thoſe "who are the greateſt ſlanderers, which was "wonderfully exemplified on this occaſion. "On the day the book was firſt vended, a "crowd of authors beſieged the ſhop; in-"treaties, advices, threats of law and bat-"tery, nay cries of treaſon, were all employed "to hinder the coming-out of the *Dunciad*: "on the other ſide, the bookſellers and "hawkers made as great efforts to procure "it. What could a few poor authors do "againſt ſo great a majority as the publick? "There was no ſtopping a torrent with a "finger, ſo out it came.

" Many ludicrous circumſtances attended
" it. The *Dunces* (for by this name they
" were called) held weekly clubs, to conſult
" of hoſtilities againſt the author: one wrote
" a Letter to a great miniſter, aſſuring him
" Mr. Pope was the greateſt enemy the go-
" vernment had; and another bought his
" image in clay, to execute him in effigy,
" with which ſad ſort of ſatisfaction the gen-
" tlemen were a little comforted.

" Some falſe editions of the book having
" an owl in their frontiſpiece, the true one,
" to diſtinguiſh it, fixed in its ſtead an aſs
" laden with authors. Then another ſur-
" reptitious one being printed with the ſame
" aſs, the new edition in octavo returned
" for diſtinction to the owl again. Hence
" aroſe a great conteſt of bookſellers againſt
" bookſellers, and advertiſements againſt ad-
" vertiſements; ſome recommending the edi-
" tion of the owl, and others the edition of
" the aſs; by which names they came to be
" diſtinguiſhed, to the great honour alſo of
" the gentlemen of the *Dunciad*."

Pope

Pope appears by this narrative to have contemplated his victory over the *Dunces* with great exultation; and ſuch was his delight in the tumult which he had raiſed, that for a while his natural ſenſibility was ſuſpended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, conſidering them only as the neceſſary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given.

It cannot however be concealed that, by his own confeſſion, he was the aggreſſor; for nobody believes that the letters in the *Bathos* were placed at random; and it may be diſcovered that, when he thinks himſelf concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in thoſe diſtinctions which he had affected to deſpiſe. He is proud that his book was preſented to the King and Queen by the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility and perſons of the firſt diſtinction.

The edition of which he ſpeaks was, I believe, that, which by telling in the text the

names and in the notes the characters of thoſe whom he had ſatiriſed, was made intelligible and diverting. The criticks had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; thoſe who were ſtrangers to petty literature, and therefore unable to decypher initials and blanks, had now names and perſons brought within their view; and delighted in the viſible effect of thoſe ſhafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated as ſhot into the air.

Dennis, upon the freſh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had for a time been appeaſed by mutual civilities; and publiſhed remarks, which he had till then ſuppreſſed, upon the *Rape of the Lock*. Many more grumbled in ſecret, or vented their reſentment in the newſpapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Burnet with *pious paſſion*, pretended that his moral character was injured, and for ſome time declared his reſolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeaſed

peaſed him, by changing *plous paſſion* to *cordial friendſhip*, and by a note, in which he vehemently diſclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the firſt expreſſion.

Aaron Hill, who was repreſented as diving for the prize, expoſtulated with Pope in a manner ſo much ſuperior to all mean ſolicitation, that Pope was reduced to ſneak and ſhuffle; ſometimes to deny, and ſometimes to apologiſe; he firſt endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The *Dunciad*, in the complete edition, is addreſſed to Dr. Swift: of the notes, part was written by Dr. Arbuthnot, and an apologetical Letter was prefixed, ſigned by Cleland, but ſuppoſed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon dulneſs, he ſeems to have indulged himſelf awhile in tranquillity; but his ſubſequent productions prove that he was not idle. He publiſhed (1731) a poem on *Taſte*, in which he very particularly and ſeverely criticiſes the houſe, the

the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments of *Timon*, a man of great wealth and little taſte. By *Timon* he was univerſally ſuppoſed, and by the Earl of Burlington, to whom the poem is addreſſed, was privately ſaid, to mean the Duke of Chandos; a man perhaps too much delighted with pomp and ſhow, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who had conſequently the voice of the publick in his favour.

A violent outcry was therefore raiſed againſt the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was ſaid to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a preſent of a thouſand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of inſulting him by the kindneſs of his invitation.

The receipt of the thouſand pounds Pope publickly denied; but from the reproach which the attack on a character ſo amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of eſcaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was ſatisfied; and he was at laſt reduced to ſhelter his temerity behind diſſimulation, and endeavour

endeavour to make that diſbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory Letter to the Duke, which was anſwered with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuſe without believing his profeſſions. He ſaid, that to have ridiculed his taſte, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindneſs that had been exchanged between them, it had been leſs eaſily excuſed.

Pope, in one of his Letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, *owns that ſuch criticks can intimidate him, nay almoſt perſuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deſerves.* The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can eaſily go on without him, and in a ſhort time will ceaſe to miſs him. I have heard of an idiot, who uſed to revenge his vexations by laying all night upon the bridge. *There is nothing*, ſays Juvenal, *that a man will not believe in his own favour.* Pope had been flattered till he thought himſelf one of the moving powers in the ſyſtem of life. When he talked of laying

laying down his pen, thoſe who ſat round him intreated and implored, and ſelf-love did not ſuffer him to ſuſpect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he ſeemed to love with more tenderneſs than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old; an age at which the mind begins leſs eaſily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow leſs flexible, and when therefore the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt.

In the next year he loſt his mother, not by an unexpected death, for ſhe had laſted to the age of ninety-three; but ſhe did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the higheſt degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happineſs of living till he was at the ſummit of poetical reputation, till he was at eaſe in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame, and found no diminution of his reſpect or tenderneſs. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to

them

them he was gentle. Life has, among its ſoothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than ſuch a ſon.

One of the paſſages of Pope's life, which ſeems to deſerve ſome enquiry, was a publication of Letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of *Curll*, a rapacious bookſeller of no good fame, were by him printed and ſold. This volume containing ſome Letters from noblemen, Pope incited a proſecution againſt him in the Houſe of Lords for breach of privilege, and attended himſelf to ſtimulate the reſentment of his friends. *Curll* appeared at the bar, and, knowing himſelf in no great danger, ſpoke of Pope with very little reverence. *He has*, ſaid Curll, *a knack at verſifying, but in proſe I think myſelf a match for him.* When the orders of the Houſe were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed; Curll went away triumphant, and Pope was left to ſeek ſome other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to ſale

a number

a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's epiſtolary correſpondence; that he aſked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himſelf authoriſed to uſe his purchaſe to his own advantage.

That Curll gave a true account of the tranſaction, it is reaſonable to believe, becauſe no falſhood was ever detected; and when ſome years afterwards I mentioned it to Lintot, the ſon of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than any body elſe how Curll obtained the copies, becauſe another parcel was at the ſame time ſent to himſelf, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his reſolution not to pay a porter, and conſequently not to deal with a nameleſs agent.

Such care had been taken to make them publick, that they were ſent at once to two bookſellers; to Curll, who was likely to ſeize them as a prey, and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the ſeeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected.

That to make them publick was the only purpoſe may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, becauſe the numbers offered to ſale by the private meſſengers ſhewed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impreſſion.

It ſeems that Pope, being deſirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulſion; that when he could complain that his Letters were ſurreptitiouſly publiſhed, he might decently and defenſively publiſh them himſelf.

Pope's private correſpondence, thus promulgated, filled the nation with praiſes of his candour, tenderneſs, and benevolence, the purity of his purpoſes, and the fidelity of his friendſhip. There were ſome Letters which a very good or a very wiſe man would wiſh ſuppreſſed; but, as they had been already expoſed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

From the peruſal of thoſe Letters, Mr. Allen firſt conceived the deſire of knowing him; and

and with ſo much zeal did he cultivate the friendſhip which he had newly formed, that when Pope told his purpoſe of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the coſt.

This however Pope did not accept; but in time ſolicited a ſubſcription for a Quarto volume, which appeared (1737) I believe, with ſufficient profit. In the Preface he tells that his Letters were repoſited in a friend's library, ſaid to be the Earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence ſtolen was ſent to the preſs. The ſtory was doubtleſs received with different degrees of credit. It may be ſuſpected that the Preface to the Miſcellanies was written to prepare the publick for ſuch an incident; and to ſtrengthen this opinion, James Worſdale, a painter, who was employed in clandeſtine negotiations, but whoſe veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the meſſenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curll.

When they were thus publiſhed and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and perſons either then living or not yet forgotten, they

they may be ſuppoſed to have found readers; but as the facts were minute, and the characters being either private or literary, were little known, or little regarded, they awakened no popular kindneſs or reſentment: the book never became much the ſubject of converſation; ſome read it as contemporary hiſtory, and ſome perhaps as a model of epiſtolary language; but thoſe who read it did not talk of it. Not much therefore was added by it to fame or envy; nor do I remember that it produced either publick praiſe, or publick cenſure.

It had however, in ſome degree, the recommendation of novelty. Our language has few Letters, except thoſe of ſtateſmen. Howel indeed, about a century ago, publiſhed his Letters, which are commended by *Morhoff*, and which alone of his hundred volumes continue his memory. Loveday's Letters were printed only once; thoſe of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs. Phillips's [*Orinda's*] are equally neglected; and thoſe of Walſh ſeem written as exerciſes, and were never ſent to any living miſtreſs or friend. Pope's epiſtolary excellence had an open

field; he had no Engliſh rival, living or dead.

Pope is ſeen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly ſuffers no diſgrace in the compariſon; but it muſt be remembered, that he had the power of favouring himſelf: he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards ſelected thoſe which he had moſt happily conceived, or moſt diligently laboured; and I know not whether there does not appear ſomething more ſtudied and artificial in his productions than the reſt, except one long Letter by Bolingbroke, compoſed with all the ſkill and induſtry of a profeſſed author. It is indeed not eaſy to diſtinguiſh affectation from habit; he that has once ſtudiouſly formed a ſtyle, rarely writes afterwards with complete eaſe. Pope may be ſaid to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift perhaps like a man who remembered that he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they riſe into his mind.

Before

Before theſe Letters appeared, he publiſhed the firſt part of what he perſuaded himſelf to think a ſyſtem of Ethicks, under the title of an *Eſſay on Man*; which, if his Letter to Swift (of Sept. 14, 1725) be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his conſideration, and of which he ſeems to have deſired the ſucceſs with great ſolicitude. He had now many open and doubtleſs many ſecret enemies. The *Dunces* were yet ſmarting with the war; and the ſuperiority which he publickly arrogated, diſpoſed the world to wiſh his humiliation.

All this he knew, and againſt all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inſcribed, were in the firſt editions carefully ſuppreſſed; and the poem, being of a new kind, was aſcribed to one or another, as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given, ſays Warburton, to every man, except him only who could write it. Thoſe who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and thoſe admired it who are willing to ſcatter

praiſe at random, which while it is unappropriated excites no envy. Thoſe friends of Pope, that were truſted with the ſecret, went about laviſhing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never ſo much in danger from any former rival.

To thoſe authors whom he had perſonally offended, and to thoſe whoſe opinion the world conſidered as deciſive, and whom he ſuſpected of envy or malevolence, he ſent his eſſay as a preſent before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praiſes, which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With theſe precautions, in 1733 was publiſhed the firſt part of the *Eſſay on Man*. There had been for ſome time a report that Pope was buſy upon a Syſtem of Morality; but this deſign was not diſcovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; ſome thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, ſome, as will always happen, favoured him as an adven-

turer, and ſome cenſured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect; the ſale increaſed, and editions were multiplied.

The ſubſequent editions of the firſt Epiſtle exhibited two memorable corrections. At firſt, the poet and his friend

Expatiate freely o'er this ſcene of man,
A mighty maze *of walks without a plan.*

For which he wrote afterwards,

A mighty maze, *but not without a plan.*

For, if there were no plan, it was in vain to deſcribe or to trace the maze.

The other alteration was of theſe lines;

And ſpite of pride, *and in thy reaſon's ſpite,*
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right:

but having afterwards diſcovered, or been ſhewn, that the *truth* which ſubſiſted *in ſpite of reaſon* could not be very *clear*, he ſubſtituted

And ſpite of pride, *in erring reaſon's ſpite.*

26619

To ſuch overſights will the moſt vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The ſecond and third Epiſtles were publiſhed; and Pope was, I believe, more and more ſuſpected of writing them; at laſt, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

In the concluſion it is ſufficiently acknowledged, that the doctrine of the *Eſſay on Man* was received from Bolingbroke, who is ſaid to have ridiculed Pope, among thoſe who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the conſequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. That thoſe communications had been conſolidated into a ſcheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from proſe to verſe, is reported, but hardly can be true. The Eſſay plainly appears the fabrick of a poet: what Bolingbroke ſupplied could be only the firſt principles; the order, illuſtration, and embelliſhments muſt all be Pope's.

Theſe

Theſe principles it is not my buſineſs to clear from obſcurity, dogmatiſm, or falſehood; but they were not immediately examined; philoſophy and poetry have not often the ſame readers; and the Eſſay abounded in ſplendid amplifications and ſparkling ſentences, which were read and admired, with no great attention to their ultimate purpoſe; its flowers caught the eye, which did not ſee what the gay foliage concealed, and for a time flouriſhed in the ſunſhine of univerſal approbation. So little was any evil tendency diſcovered, that, as innocence is unſuſpicious, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation ſoon invited a tranſlator. It was firſt turned into French proſe, and afterwards by Reſnel into verſe. Both tranſlations fell into the hands of Crouſaz, who firſt, when he had the verſion in proſe, wrote a general cenſure, and afterwards reprinted Reſnel's verſion, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crouſaz was a profeſſor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatiſe of Logick, and his

Examen de Pyrrhoniſme, and, however little known or regarded, was no mean antagoniſt. His mind was one of thoſe in which philoſophy and piety are happily united. He was accuſtomed to argument and diſquiſition, and perhaps was grown too deſirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were ſolid, and his religion pure.

His inceſſant vigilance for the promotion of piety diſpoſed him to look with diſtruſt upon all metaphyſical ſyſtems of Theology, and all ſchemes of virtue and happineſs purely rational; and therefore it was not long before he was perſuaded that the poſitions of Pope, as they terminated for the moſt part in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to repreſent the whole courſe of things as a neceſſary concatenation of indiſſoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many paſſages a religious eye may eaſily diſcover expreſſions not very favourable to morals, or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the firſt ranks of learning,

learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, ſupplied by inceſſant and unlimited enquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppreſſed his imagination, nor clouded his perſpicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and at once exerted the powers of the ſcholar, the reaſoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his purſuits were too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he diſdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of oppoſition diſpoſed him to treat his adverſaries with ſuch contemptuous ſuperiority as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited againſt him the wiſhes of ſome who favoured his cauſe. He ſeems to have adopted the Roman Emperor's determination, *oderint dum metuant*; he uſed no allurements of gentle language, but wiſhed to compel rather than perſuade.

His ſtyle is copious without ſelection, and forcible without neatneſs; he took the words that

that preſented themſelves: his diction is coarſe and impure, and his ſentences are unmeaſured.

He had, in the early part of his life, pleaſed himſelf with the notice of inferior wits, and correſponded with the enemies of Pope. A Letter was produced, when he had perhaps himſelf forgotten it, in which he tells *Concanen, that* Milton *borrowed by affectation*, Dryden *by idleneſs, and* Pope *by neceſſity*. And when Theobald publiſhed *Shakeſpeare*, in oppoſition to Pope, the beſt notes were ſupplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion, and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed ſo much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited againſt him every artifice of offence, and therefore it may be ſuppoſed that his union with Pope was cenſured as hypocritical inconſtancy; but ſurely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be eaſily allowed.

lowed. Such opinions are often admitted, and diſmiſſed, without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reaſon for changing his mind about queſtions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without ſolicitation, to reſcue Pope from the talons of Crouſaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the *Eſſay on Man*, in the literary journal of that time called *The Republick of Letters*.

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the poſitions, of which he perceived himſelf not to know the full meaning, could by any mode of interpretation be made to mean well. How much he was pleaſed with his gratuitous defender, the following Letter evidently ſhews:

" SIR, March 24, 1743.

" I have juſt received from Mr. R. two " more of your Letters. It is in the greateſt

" hurry imaginable that I write this; but I
" cannot help thanking you in particular
" for your third Letter, which is ſo extreme-
" ly clear, ſhort, and full, that I think Mr.
" Crouſaz ought never to have another
" anſwer, and deſerved not ſo good an one.
" I can only ſay, you do him too much
" honour, and me too much right, ſo odd
" as the expreſſion ſeems; for you have
" made my ſyſtem as clear as I ought to have
" done, and could not. It is indeed the
" ſame ſyſtem as mine, but illuſtrated with
" a ray of your own, as they ſay our natural
" body is the ſame ſtill when it is glorified.
" I am ſure I like it better than I did before,
" and ſo will every man elſe. I know I meant
" juſt what you explain; but I did not ex-
" plain my own meaning ſo well as you.
" You underſtand me as well as I do myſelf;
" but you expreſs me better than I could
" expreſs myſelf. Pray, accept the ſincereſt
" acknowledgements. I cannot but wiſh
" theſe Letters were put together in one
" Book, and intend (with your leave) to
" procure a tranſlation of part, at leaſt, of all
" of them into French; but I ſhall not pro-
" ceed

"ceed a ſtep without your conſent and opi-
"nion, &c."

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope teſtified that, whatever might be the ſeeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him without his own conſent an inſtrument of miſchief, found him now engaged with his eyes open on the ſide of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once diſcovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he muſt have miſtaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneaſineſs incited him to deſire an explanation, declared that Hooke had miſunderſtood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him; and a little before Pope's death they had a diſpute, from

from which they parted with mutual averſion.

From this time Pope lived in the cloſeſt intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindneſs and his zeal; for he introduced him to Mr. Murray, by whoſe intereſt he became preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and to Mr. Allen, who gave him his niece and his eſtate, and by conſequence a biſhoprick. When he died, he left him the property of his works; a legacy which may be reaſonably eſtimated at four thouſand pounds.

Pope's fondneſs for the *Eſſay on Man* appeared by his deſire of its propagation. Dobſon, who had gained reputation by his verſion of Prior's *Solomon*, was employed by him to tranſlate it into Latin verſe, and was for that purpoſe ſome time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reaſon, unfiniſhed; and, by Benſon's invitation, undertook the longer taſk of *Paradiſe Loſt*. Pope then deſired his friend to find a ſcholar who ſhould turn his Eſſay into Latin proſe; but no ſuch performance has ever appeared.

Pope

Pope lived at this time *among the great*, with that reception and reſpect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private miſconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with ſo much conſideration as, at his requeſt, to ſolicit and obtain from the French Miniſter an abbey for Mr. Southcot, whom he conſidered himſelf as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his intereſt, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illneſs.

It was ſaid, that, when the Court was at Richmond, Queen Caroline had declared her intention to viſit him. This may have been only a careleſs effuſion, thought on no more: the report of ſuch notice, however, was ſoon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or miſapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, left his houſe for a time, not, I ſuppoſe, for any other reaſon than leſt he ſhould be thought to ſtay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was therefore

therefore angry at Swift, who repreſents him as *refuſing the viſits of a Queen*, becauſe he knew that what had never been offered, had never been refuſed.

Beſide the general ſyſtem of morality ſuppoſed to be contained in the *Eſſay on Man*, it was his intention to write diſtinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the Epiſtle to Lord Bathurſt (1733) on the *Uſe of Riches*, a piece on which he declared great labour to have been beſtowed *.

Into this poem ſome incidents are hiſtorically thrown, and ſome known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to ſay how far they are real or fictitious; but the praiſe of *Kyrl*, the *Man of Roſs*, deſerves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his publick works and private charities, is ſaid to have diffuſed all thoſe bleſſings from *five hundred a year*. Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that *Kyrl*

* Spence.

was

was a man of known integrity, and active benevolence, by whoſe ſolicitation the wealthy were perſuaded to pay contributions to his charitable ſchemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmoſt extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. *Victor* received from the miniſter of the place, and I have preſerved it, that the praiſe of a good man being made more credible, may be more ſolid. Narrations of romantick and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it muſt be ſhewn to be poſſible.

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning with ſome indignation the inſcription on the Monument.

When this poem was firſt publiſhed, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obſcure. Pope ſeems to have written with no very diſtinct idea; for he

calls that an *Epiſtle to Bathurſt*, in which Bathurſt is introduced as ſpeaking.

He afterwards (1734) inſcribed to Lord Cobham his *Characters of Men*, written with cloſe attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to eſtabliſh and exemplify his favourite theory of the *Ruling Paſſion*, by which he means an original direction of deſire to ſome particular object, an innate affection which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole ſyſtem of life, either openly, or more ſecretly by the intervention of ſome accidental or ſubordinate propenſion.

Of any paſſion, thus innate and irreſiſtible, the exiſtence may reaſonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means conſtant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at one time a lover of pleaſure, is at another a lover of money. Thoſe indeed who attain any excellence, commonly ſpend life in one purſuit; for excellence is not often gained upon eaſier terms. But to the particular ſpecies of excellence

cellence men are directed, not by an aſcendant planet or predominating humour, but by the firſt book which they read, ſome early converſation which they heard, or ſome accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It muſt be at leaſt allowed that this *ruling Paſſion*, antecedent to reaſon and obſervation, muſt have an object independent on human contrivance; for there can be no natural deſire of artificial good. No man therefore can be born, in the ſtrict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where money does not exiſt; nor can he be born, in a moral ſenſe, a lover of his country; for ſociety, politically regulated, is a ſtate contradiſtinguiſhed from a ſtate of nature; and any attention to that coalition of intereſts which makes the happineſs of a country, is poſſible only to thoſe whom enquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is in itſelf pernicious as well as falſe: its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predeſtination, or overruling principle which cannot be reſiſted; he that admits it, is prepared to comply with

every deſire that caprice or opportunity ſhall excite, and to flatter himſelf that he ſubmits only to the lawful dominion of Nature, in obeying the reſiſtleſs authority of his *ruling Paſſion.*

Pope has formed his theory with ſo little ſkill, that, in the examples by which he illuſtrates and confirms it, he has confounded paſſions, appetites, and habits.

To the *Characters of Men* he added ſoon after, in an Epiſtle ſuppoſed to have been addreſſed to Martha Blount, but which the laſt edition has taken from her, the *Characters of Women.* This poem, which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great ſucceſs, was neglected at its firſt publication, as the commentator ſuppoſes, becauſe the publick was informed by an advertiſement, that it contained *no Character drawn from the Life*; an aſſertion which Pope probably did not expect or wiſh to have been believed, and which he ſoon gave his readers ſufficient reaſon to diſtruſt, by telling them in a note, that the work was imperfect, becauſe part of his ſubject was *Vice too high* to be yet expoſed.

The

The time however ſoon came, in which it was ſafe to diſplay the Dutcheſs of Marlborough under the name of *Atoſſa*; and her character was inſerted with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

He publiſhed from time to time (between 1730 and 1749) Imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once as was ſuſpected without it. What he was upon moral principles aſhamed to own, he ought to have ſuppreſſed. Of theſe pieces it is uſeleſs to ſettle the dates, as they had ſeldom much relation to the times, and perhaps had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiariſed, by adapting their ſentiments to modern topicks, by making Horace ſay of Shakſpeare what he originally ſaid of Ennius, and accommodating his ſatires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was firſt practiſed in the reign of Charles the Second by Oldham and Rocheſter, at leaſt I remember no inſtances more ancient. It is a kind of

middle compoſition between tranſlation and original deſign, which pleaſes when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It ſeems to have been Pope's favourite amuſement; for he has carried it further than any former poet.

He publiſhed likewiſe a revival, in ſmoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's Satires, which was recommended to him by the Duke of Shrewſbury and the Earl of Oxford. They made no great impreſſion on the publick. Pope ſeems to have known their imbecillity, and therefore ſuppreſſed them while he was yet contending to riſe in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himſelf.

The Epiſtle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which ſeems to be derived in its firſt deſign from Boileau's Addreſs *à ſon Eſprit*, was publiſhed in January 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inſcribed. It is to be regretted that either honour or pleaſure ſhould have been miſſed by Arbuthnot; a man eſtimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

Arbuth-

Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehenſion, ſkilful in his profeſſion, verſed in the ſciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his maſs of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a ſcholar with great brilliancy of wit; a wit, who, in the crowd of life, retained and diſcovered a noble ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope ſeems to reckon with the publick. He vindicates himſelf from cenſures; and with dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims to kindneſs and reſpect.

Into this poem are interwoven ſeveral paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the ſatirical lines upon Addiſon, of which the laſt couplet has been twice corrected. It was at firſt,

Who would not ſmile if ſuch a man there be?
Who would not laugh if Addiſon were he?

Then,

Who would not grieve if ſuch a man there be?
Who would not laugh if Addiſon were he?

At laſt it is,

Who but muſt laugh if ſuch a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

He was at this time at open war with Lord Hervey, who had diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a ſteady adherent to the Miniſtry; and, being offended with a contemptuous anſwer to one of his pamphlets, had ſummoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the firſt attack, perhaps cannot now be eaſily known: he had written an invective againſt Pope, whom he calls, *Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obſcure*; and hints that his father was a *hatter*. To this Pope wrote a reply in verſe and proſe: the verſes are in this poem; and the proſe, though it was never ſent, is printed among his Letters, but to a cool reader of the preſent time exhibits nothing but a tedious malignity.

His laſt Satires, of the general kind, were two dialogues, named from the year in which they were publiſhed *Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight*. In theſe poems many are praiſed and many are reproached. Pope was then entangled

entangled in the oppoſition; a follower of the Prince of Wales, who dined at his houſe, and the friend of many who obſtructed and cenſured the conduct of the Miniſters. His political partiality was too plainly ſhewn; he forgot the prudence with which he paſſed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending through much more violent conflicts of faction.

In the firſt dialogue, having an opportunity of praiſing Allen of Bath, he aſked his leave to mention him as a man not illuſtrious by any merit of his anceſtors, and called him in his verſes *low-born Allen*. Men are ſeldom ſatisfied with praiſe introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen ſeems not to have taken any pleaſure in his epithet, which was afterwards ſoftened into *humble Allen*.

In the ſecond Dialogue he took ſome liberty with one of the *Foxes*, among others; which *Fox*, in a reply to Lyttelton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendſhip of a lampooner, who ſcattered his ink without fear or decency, and againſt whom he hoped the reſentment of the Legiſlature would quickly be diſcharged.

About

About this time Paul Whitehead, a ſmall poet, was ſummoned before the Lords for a poem called *Manners*, together with Dodſley his publiſher. Whitehead, who hung looſe upon ſociety, ſculked and eſcaped; but Dodſley's ſhop and family made his appearance neceſſary. He was, however, ſoon diſmiſſed; and the whole proceſs was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope than to puniſh Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon ſtateſmen. That he deſiſted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his commentator, to his deſpair of prevailing over the corruption of the time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion that the dread of his ſatire would countervail the love of power or of money; he pleaſed himſelf with being important and formidable, and gratified ſometimes his pride, and ſometimes his reſentment; till at laſt he began to think he ſhould be more ſafe, if he were leſs buſy.

The

The *Memoirs of Scriblerus*, publiſhed about this time, extend only to the firſt book of a work, projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who uſed to meet in the time of Queen Anne, and denominated themſelves the *Scriblerus Club*. Their purpoſe was to cenſure the abuſes of learning by a fictitious Life of an infatuated Scholar. They were diſperſed; the deſign was never completed; and Warburton laments its miſcarriage, as an event very diſaſtrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be eſtimated by this ſpecimen, which ſeems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches perhaps by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules are ſo little practiſed, that they are not known; nor can the ſatire be underſtood but by the learned: he raiſes phantoms of abſurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diſeaſes that were never felt.

For this reaſon the joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice

notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiſer, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The deſign cannot boaſt of much originality; for, beſides its general reſemblance to *Don Quixote*, there will be found in it particular imitations of the Hiſtory of Mr. *Ouffle*.

Swift carried ſo much of it into Ireland as ſupplied him with hints for his *Travels*; and with thoſe the world might have been contented, though the reſt had been ſuppreſſed.

Pope had ſought for images and ſentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the Engliſh writers; he had conſulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a claſs of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not aſhamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A ſmall ſelection from the Italians who wrote in Latin had been publiſhed at London, about the latter end of the

the laſt century, by a man who concealed his name, but whom his Preface ſhews to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and (1740) publiſhed it in two volumes, but injuriouſly omitted his predeceſſor's preface. To theſe books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid, the authors were ſtill neglected, and the editor was neither praiſed nor cenſured.

He did not ſink into idleneſs; he had planned a work, which he conſidered as ſubſequent to his *Eſſay on Man*, of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift.

" March 25, 1736.

" If ever I write any more Epiſtles in verſe, " one of them ſhall be addreſſed to you. " I have long concerted it, and begun it; " but I would make what bears your name " as finiſhed as my laſt work ought to be, " that is to ſay, more finiſhed than any of " the reſt. The ſubject is large, and will " divide into four Epiſtles, which naturally " follow the *Eſſay on Man*, viz. 1. Of the " Extent and Limits of Human Reaſon and

" Science.

" Science. 2. A View of the uſeful and " therefore attainable, and of the unuſeful " and therefore unattainable Acts. 3. Of " the Nature, Ends, Application, and Uſe " of different Capacities. 4. Of the Uſe of " *Learning*, of the *Science*, of the *World*, " and of *Wit*. It will conclude with a " ſatire againſt the Miſapplication of all theſe, " exemplified by Pictures, Characters, and " Examples."

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an aſthma, and finding the powers of life gradually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's requeſt, another book to the *Dunciad*, of which the deſign is to ridicule ſuch ſtudies as are either hopeleſs or uſeleſs, as either purſue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no uſe.

When this book was printed (1742) the laurel had been for ſome time upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be ſuppoſed that Pope could regard with much kindneſs or eſteem, though in one of the

Imitations of *Horace* he has liberally enough praiſed the *Careleſs Huſband*. In the *Dunciad*, among other worthleſs ſcribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his *Apology*, complains of the great poet's unkindneſs as more injurious, *becauſe*, ſays he, *I never have offended him*.

It might have been expected that Pope ſhould have been, in ſome degree, mollified by this ſubmiſſive gentleneſs; but no ſuch conſequence appeared. Though he condeſcended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuouſly in one of his Satires, and again in his Epiſtle to Arbuthnot; and in the fourth book of the *Dunciad* attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not eaſily diſcoverable. Perhaps he imagined that, in ridiculing the Laureat, he ſatiriſed thoſe by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he inſulted to inſult the great.

The ſeverity of this ſatire left Cibber no longer any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe that he could

could diſturb the quiet of his adverſary, and doubtleſs did not want inſtigators, who, without any care about the victory, deſired to amuſe themſelves by looking on the conteſt. He therefore gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his reſolution from that time never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adverſary by perſeverance, if he cannot conquer him by ſtrength.

The inceſſant and unappeaſable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very diſtant cauſe. After the *Three Hours after Marriage* had been driven off the ſtage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded ſcene was yet freſh in memory, it happened that Cibber played *Bayes* in the *Rehearſal*; and, as it had been uſual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical tranſactions, he ſaid, that he once thought to have introduced his lovers diſguiſed in a Mummy and a Crocodile. "This," ſays he, "was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt of the play." Pope, who was behind the ſcenes, meeting him as he left the

ſtage, attacked him, as he ſays, with all the virulence of a *Wit out of his ſenſes*; to which he replied, "that he would take no other notice "of what was ſaid by ſo particular a man "than to declare, that, as often as he play-"ed that part, he would repeat the ſame "provocation."

He ſhews his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he ſo zealouſly defended; and adds an idle ſtory of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if ſuffered to remain without notice, would have been very ſoon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his paſſion had not been too powerful for his underſtanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world ſeeks nothing but diverſion, which is given at the expence of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curioſity was excited; what Pope would ſay of Cibber nobody enquired, but in hope that Pope's aſperity might betray his pain and leſſen his dignity.

He ſhould therefore have ſuffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confeſſing that it ſtung him. The diſhonour of being ſhewn as Cibber's antagoniſt could never be compenſated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to loſe; when Pope had exhauſted all his malignity upon him, he would riſe in the eſteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him deſpicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt, would have been ſtruck in vain.

But Pope's iraſcibility prevailed, and he reſolved to tell the whole Engliſh world that he was at war with Cibber; and to ſhew that he thought him no common adverſary, he prepared no common vengeance; he publiſhed a new edition of the *Dunciad*, in which he degraded *Theobald* from his painful pre-eminence, and enthroned *Cibber* in his ſtead. Unhappily the two heroes were of oppoſite characters, and Pope was unwilling to loſe what he had already written; he has therefore depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the cold pedantry and ſluggiſh pertinacity of Theobald.

Pope

Pope was ignorant enough of his own intereſt to make another change, and introduced Oſborne contending for the prize among the bookſellers. Oſborne was a man intirely deſtitute of ſhame, without ſenſe of any diſgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raiſed Pope's reſentment, that he ſhould be put into the *Dunciad*; but he had the fate of *Caſſandra*; I gave no credit to his prediction, till in time I ſaw it accompliſhed. The ſhafts of ſatire were directed equally in vain againſt Cibber and Oſborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impaſſive dulneſs of the other. Pope confeſſed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to thoſe who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himſelf; by transferring the ſame ridicule from one to another, he deſtroyed its efficacy; for, by ſhewing that what he had ſaid of one he was ready to ſay of another, he reduced himſelf to the inſignificance of his own magpye, who from his cage calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the *Dunciad* with another pamphlet, which, Pope ſaid, *would be as good as a doſe of hartſhorn to him*; but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardſon relate, that he attended his father on a viſit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who ſaid, *Theſe things are my diverſion.* They ſat by him while he peruſed it, and ſaw his features writhen with anguiſh; and young Richardſon ſaid to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preſerved from ſuch diverſion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

From this time, finding his diſeaſes more oppreſſive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer ſtrained his faculties with any original compoſition, nor propoſed any other employment for his remaining life than the reviſal and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and aſſiſtance from Warburton, whom he appears to have truſted and honoured in the higheſt degree.

He

He laid aſide his Epick Poem, perhaps without much loſs to mankind; for his hero was *Brutus* the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, eſtabliſhed a colony in Britain. The ſubject therefore was of the fabulous age; the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhauſted, and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not eaſily be recalled, when it is invited in blank verſe, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due conſideration of the nature of our language. The ſketch is, at leaſt in part, preſerved by Ruffhead; by which it appears, that Pope was thoughtleſs enough to model the names of his heroes with diſcordant terminations not known in the ſame age.

He lingered through the next year; but perceived himſelf, as he expreſſes it, *going down the hill*. He had for at leaſt five years been afflicted with an aſthma, and other diſorders, which his phyſicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he conſulted Dr. Thomſon, a man who had, by large promiſes, and free cenſures of the com-

mon practice of phyſick, forced himſelf up into ſudden reputation. Thomſon declared his diſtemper to be a dropſy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but confeſſed that his belly did not ſubſide. Thomſon had many enemies, and Pope was perſuaded to diſmiſs him.

While he was yet capable of amuſement and converſation, as he was one day ſitting in the air with Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he ſaw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom of the terrace, and aſked Lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, croſſed his legs, and ſat ſtill; but Lord Marchmont, who was younger and leſs captious, waited on the Lady; who, when he came to her, aſked, *What, is he not dead yet?* She is ſaid to have neglected him, with ſhameful unkindneſs, in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave, ſhe had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their converſation therefore was endearing, for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of

of congenial notions. Perhaps he conſidered her unwillingneſs to approach the chamber of ſickneſs as female weakneſs, or human frailty; perhaps he was conſcious to himſelf of peeviſhneſs and impatience, or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet conſider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and, if he had ſuffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only ſhrunk within himſelf; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondneſs.

In May 1744, his death was approaching *; on the ſixth, he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a ſufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of ſeeing things as through a curtain, and in falſe colours; and one day, in the preſence of Dodſley, aſked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He ſaid that his greateſt inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke ſometimes wept over him in this ſtate of helpleſs decay; and being told

* Spence.

by Spence, that Pope, at the intermiſſion of his delirioufneſs, was always ſaying ſomething kind either of his preſent or abſent friends, and that his humanity ſeemed to have ſurvived his underſtanding, anſwered, *It has ſo.* And added, *I never in my life knew a man that had ſo tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendſhip for mankind.* At another time he ſaid, *I have known Pope theſe thirty years, and value myſelf more in his friendſhip than*—his grief then ſuppreſſed his voice.

Pope expreſſed undoubting confidence of a future ſtate. Being aſked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papiſt, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a prieſt ſhould not be called, he anſwered, *I do not think it eſſential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it.*

In the morning, after the prieſt had given him the laſt ſacraments, he ſaid, "There is "nothing that is meritorious but virtue and "friendſhip, and indeed friendſhip itſelf is "only a part of virtue."

He

He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, ſo placidly, that the attendants did not diſcern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator, the Biſhop of Glouceſter.

He left the care of his papers to his executors, the Earl of Marchmont and Lord Bolingbroke, whom undoubtedly he expected to be proud of the truſt, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time Dodſley the bookſeller attended one of them, to ſolicit preference as the publiſher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inſpected; and whatever was the reaſon, the world has been diſappointed of what was *reſerved for the next age*.

He loſt, indeed, the favour of Bolingbroke by a kind of poſthumous offence. The political pamphlet called *The Patriot King* had been put into his hands, that he might procure the impreſſion of a very few copies, to be

be diſtributed according to the author's direction among his friends, and Pope aſſured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, ſoon after his death, the printer brought and reſigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print, and to retain in ſecret. He kept, as was obſerved, his engagement to Pope better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the tranſaction, till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himſelf obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impreſſion to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by reſentment of violated faith; reſentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more truſted. But here the anger might have ſtopped; the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet ſatiſfied; his thirſt of vengeance incited him to blaſt

blaſt the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his laſt ſtruggles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the publick, with all its aggravations. Warburton, whoſe heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent ſeparation, thought it proper for him to interpoſe; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of truſt has always ſomething criminal, but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced, what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or leſs excuſable by the motives that produce it, he enquires what evil purpoſe could have induced Pope to break his promiſe. He could not delight his vanity by uſurping the work, which, though not ſold in ſhops, had been ſhewn to a number more than ſufficient to preſerve the author's claim; he could not gratify his avarice; for he could not ſell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead; and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himſelf, would be uſeleſs.

Warburton

Warburton therefore ſuppoſes, with great appearance of reaſon, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might perhaps have deſtroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preſerve, even without its author's approbation.

He brought ſome reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the houſe of Allen, where ſhe comported herſelf with ſuch indecent arrogance, that ſhe parted from Mrs. Allen in a ſtate of irreconcileable diſlike, and the door was for ever barred againſt her. This excluſion ſhe reſented with ſo much bitterneſs as to refuſe any legacy from Pope, unleſs he left the world with a diſavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to reſiſt the violence of her temper, or, perhaps

haps with the prejudice of a lover, perſuaded that ſhe had ſuffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with female reſentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the Hoſpital at Bath; obſerving that Pope was always a bad accomptant, and that if to 150 *l.* he had put a cypher more, he had come nearer to the truth.

THE

THE perſon of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the niceſt model. He has, in his account of the *Little Club*, compared himſelf to a ſpider, and is deſcribed as protuberant behind and before. He is ſaid to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a conſtitution originally feeble and weak; and as bodies of a tender frame are eaſily diſtorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His ſtature was ſo low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was neceſſary to raiſe his ſeat. But his face was not diſpleaſing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental diſtortion, his vital functions were ſo much diſordered, that his life was a *long diſeaſe*. His moſt frequent aſſailant was the headach, which he uſed to relieve by inhaling the ſteam

ſteam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Moſt of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domeſtick of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then ſo weak as to ſtand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely ſenſible of cold, ſo that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a ſhirt of very coarſe warm linen with fine ſleeves. When he roſe, he was inveſted in boddice made of ſtiff canvaſs, being ſcarce able to hold himſelf erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waiſtcoat. One ſide was contracted. His legs were ſo ſlender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of ſtockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dreſs or undreſs himſelf, and neither went to bed nor roſe without help. His weakneſs made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almoſt all away; and he uſed to dine ſometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dreſs

of ceremony was black, with a tye-wig, and a little ſword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his ſickneſs required, had taught him all the unpleaſing and unſocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing ſhould give way to his eaſe or humour, as a child, whoſe parents will not hear her cry, has an unreſiſted dominion in the nurſery.

C'eſt que l'enfant toûjours eſt homme,
C'eſt que l'homme eſt toûjours enfant.

When he wanted to ſleep he *nodded in company*; and once ſlumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendſhip gave, procured him many invitations; but he was a very troubleſome inmate. He brought no ſervant, and had ſo many wants, that a numerous attendance was ſcarcely able to ſupply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, becauſe he exacted the attention and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were ſo frequent

and

and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford diſcharged ſome of the ſervants for their reſolute refuſal of his meſſages. The maids, when they had neglected their buſineſs, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his conſtant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burthenſome; but he was careful to recompenſe her want of ſleep; and Lord Oxford's ſervant declared, that in a houſe where her buſineſs was to anſwer his call, ſhe would not aſk for wages.

He had another fault, eaſily incident to thoſe who, ſuffering much pain, think themſelves entitled to whatever pleaſures they can ſnatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly ſeaſoned and of ſtrong taſte; and, at the intervals of the table, amuſed himſelf with biſcuits and dry conſerves. If he ſat down to a variety of diſhes, he would oppreſs his ſtomach with repletion, and though he ſeemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues

to his heart, pampered him with preſents of luxury, which he did not ſuffer to ſtand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the luſtre of their lives. Hannibal, ſays Juvenal, did not periſh by a javelin or a ſword; the ſlaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed by ſome of his friends to a ſilver ſaucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his ſenſuality ſhortened his life will not be haſtily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation ſo irregular laſted ſix and fifty years, notwithſtanding ſuch pertinacious diligence of ſtudy and meditation.

In all his intercourſe with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purpoſes by indirect and unſuſpected methods. *He hardly drank tea without a ſtratagem.* If, at the houſe of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to aſk for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as ſomething convenient; though, when it was procured,

he ſoon made it appear for whoſe ſake it had been [illegible]mended. Thus he teized Lord Orrery till he obtained a ſcreen. He practiſed his arts on ſuch ſmall occaſions, that Lady Bolingbroke uſed to ſay, in a French phraſe, that *he plaid the politician about cabbages and turnips.* His unjuſtifiable impreſſion of the *Patriot King*, as it can be imputed to no particular motive, muſt have proceeded from his general habit of ſecrecy and cunning; he caught an opportunity of a ſly trick, and pleaſed himſelf with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial converſation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be ſaid to have reſembled Dryden, as being not one that was diſtinguiſhed by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that, ſo near his time, ſo much ſhould be known of what he has written, and ſo little of what he has ſaid: traditional memory retains no ſallies of raillery, nor ſentences of obſervation; nothing either pointed or ſolid, either wiſe or merry. One apophthegm only ſtands upon record. When an objection raiſed againſt his inſcription for Shakſpeare was defended

by the authority of *Patrick*, he replied—*horreſco referens*—that *he would allow the publiſher of a Dictionary to know the meaning of a ſingle word, but not of two words put together.*

He was fretful, and eaſily diſpleaſed, and allowed himſelf to be capriciouſly reſentful. He would ſometimes leave Lord Oxford ſilently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and meſſages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infeſted by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peeviſhneſs, could by no intreaties be reſtrained from contradicting him, till their diſputes were ſharpened to ſuch aſperity, that one or the other quitted the houſe.

He ſometimes condeſcended to be jocular with ſervants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever ſeen excited to laughter.

Of his domeſtick character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not

not to be in want, and therefore wiſely and magnanimouſly rejected all temptations to expence unſuitable to his fortune. This general care muſt be univerſally approved; but it ſometimes appeared in petty artifices of parcimony, ſuch as the practice of writing his compoſitions on the back of letters, as may be ſeen in the remaining copy of the *Iliad*, by which perhaps in five years five ſhillings were ſaved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and ſcantineſs of entertainment, as when he had two gueſts in his houſe, he would ſet at ſupper a ſingle pint upon the table; and having himſelf taken two ſmall glaſſes would retire, and ſay, *Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine.* Yet he tells his friends, that *he has a heart for all, a houſe for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all.*

He ſometimes, however, made a ſplendid dinner, and is ſaid to have wanted no part of the ſkill or elegance which ſuch performances require. That this magnificence ſhould be often diſplayed, that obſtinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and

caſual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which however he declares himſelf able to aſſign one hundred to charity.

Of this fortune, which as it aroſe from publick approbation was very honourably obtained, his imagination ſeems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, ſo well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted ſo much in talking of his money. In his Letters, and in his Poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or ſome hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topick of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagoniſts are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He ſeems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleaſure of contemplating his poſſeſſions, ſeems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whoſe notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices

practices of meanneſs or ſervility; a boaſt which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aſpired. Pope never ſet his genius to ſale; he never flattered thoſe whom he did not love, or praiſed thoſe whom he did not eſteem. Savage however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a diſtich for *his Highneſs's dog*.

His admiration of the Great ſeems to have increaſed in the advance of life. He paſſed over peers and ſtateſmen to inſcribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with magnanimity of which the praiſe had been compleat, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was choſen for ſo great an honour, it is not now poſſible to know; there is no trace in literary hiſtory of any particular intimacy between them; nor does the name of Congreve appear in the Letters. To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except Lord Bathurſt, none of his noble friends were ſuch as that a good man would wiſh to have his intimacy with them known to poſterity: he can derive

little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his ſocial qualities, if an eſtimate be made from his Letters, an opinion too favourable cannot eaſily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence, and particular fondneſs. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, conſtancy, and tenderneſs. It has been ſo long ſaid as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their Letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that ſuch were ſimple friendſhips of the *Golden Age*, and are now the friendſhips only of children. Very few can boaſt of hearts which they dare lay open to themſelves, and of which, by whatever accident expoſed, they do not ſhun a diſtinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourſelves we do not ſhew to our friends. There is, indeed, no tranſaction which offers ſtronger temptations to fallacy and ſophiſtication than epiſtolary intercourſe. In the eagerneſs of converſation the firſt emotions of the mind often burſt out,

out, before they are conſidered; in the tumult of buſineſs, intereſt and paſſion have their genuine effect; but a friendly Letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leiſure, in the ſtillneſs of ſolitude, and ſurely no man ſits down to depreciate by deſign his own character.

Friendſhip has no tendency to ſecure veracity; for by whom can a man ſo much wiſh to be thought better than he is, as by him whoſe kindneſs he deſires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is leſs conſtraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different diſpoſitions of mankind; but a Letter is addreſſed to a ſingle mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and muſt therefore pleaſe, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppoſe them.

To charge thoſe favourable repreſentations, which every man gives of himſelf, with the guilt of hypocritical falſhood, would ſhew more ſeverity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himſelf. Almoſt

moſt every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and moſt hearts are pure, while temptation is away. It is eaſy to awaken generous ſentiments in privacy; to deſpiſe death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While ſuch ideas are formed they are felt, and ſelf-love does not ſuſpect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the Letters of Pope are conſidered merely as compoſitions, they ſeem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write becauſe there is ſomething which the mind wiſhes to diſcharge, and another, to ſolicit the imagination becauſe ceremony or vanity requires ſomething to be written. Pope confeſſes his early Letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition*: to know whether he diſentangled himſelf from theſe perverters of epiſtolary integrity, his book and his life muſt be ſet in compariſon.

One of his favourite topicks is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deſerve no commendation,

and

and in this he was certainly not ſincere; for his high value of himſelf was ſufficiently obſerved, and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he ſays, when *he has juſt nothing elſe to do*; yet Swift complains that he was never at leiſure for converſation, becauſe he *had always ſome poetical ſcheme in his head.* It was punctually required that his writing-box ſhould be ſet upon his bed before he roſe; and Lord Oxford's domeſtick remarked, that, in the dreadful winter of Forty, ſhe was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to ſupply him with paper, leſt he ſhould loſe a thought.

He pretends inſenſibility to cenſure and criticiſm, though it was obſerved by all who knew him that every pamphlet diſturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wiſhed to deſpiſe his criticks, and therefore hoped that he did deſpiſe them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the Court paid little attention to poetry, he nurſed in his mind a fooliſh diſeſteem of Kings, and proclaims that *he never ſees Courts.*

Yet

Yet a little regard ſhewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to ſay when he was aſked by his Royal Highneſs, *how he could love a Prince while he diſliked Kings?*

He very frequently profeſſes contempt of the world, and repreſents himſelf as looking on mankind, ſometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his ſerious attention; and ſometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monſters more worthy of hatred than of pity. Theſe were diſpoſitions apparently counterfeited. How could he deſpiſe thoſe whom he lived by pleaſing, and on whoſe approbation his eſteem of himſelf was ſuperſtructed? Why ſhould he hate thoſe to whoſe favour he owed his honour and his eaſe? Of things that terminated in human life, the world is the proper judge; to deſpiſe its ſentence, if it were poſſible, is not juſt; and if it were juſt, is not poſſible. Pope was far enough from this unreaſonable temper; he was ſufficiently *a fool to Fame*, and his fault was that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his ſullenneſs were only in his Letters; he paſſed through com-

mon

mon life, ſometimes vexed, and ſometimes pleaſed, with the natural emotions of common men.

His ſcorn of the Great is repeated too often to be real; no man thinks much of that which he deſpiſes; and as falſehood is always in danger of inconſiſtency, he makes it his boaſt at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance ſwells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, leſt the clerks of the Poſt-office ſhould know his ſecrets; he has many enemies; he conſiders himſelf as ſurrounded by univerſal jealouſy; *after many deaths, and many diſperſions, two or three of us*, ſays he, *may ſtill be brought together; not to plot, but to divert ourſelves, and the world too, if it pleaſes*; and they can live together, and *ſhew what friends wits may be, in ſpite of all the fools in the world.* All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a publick character like his inevitably excites; and with what degree of friendſhip the wits might live, very few were ſo much fools as ever to enquire.

Some part of this pretended diſcontent he learned from Swift, and expreſſes it, I think, moſt frequently in his correſpondence with him. Swift's reſentment was unreaſonable, but it was ſincere; Pope's was the mere mimickry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that *a glut of ſtudy and retirement had thrown him on the world*, and that there was danger leſt *a glut of the world ſhould throw him back upon ſtudy and retirement*. To this Swift anſwered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet either acted or ſuffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it muſt be ſome very powerful reaſon that can drive back to ſolitude him who has once enjoyed the pleaſures of ſociety.

In the Letters both of Swift and Pope there appears ſuch narrowneſs of mind, as makes them inſenſible of any excellence that has not ſome affinity with their own, and confines their eſteem and approbation to ſo ſmall a number, that whoever ſhould form his opinion of the age from their repreſentation, would

would ſuppoſe them to have lived amidſt ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and perſecuted by thoſe that could not underſtand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he profeſſes contempt of fame, when he ſpeaks of riches and poverty, of ſucceſs and diſappointments, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not expreſs his habitual and ſettled ſentiments, but either wilfully diſguiſes his own character, or, what is more likely, inveſts himſelf with temporary qualities, and ſallies out in the colours of the preſent moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and ſorrows, acted ſtrongly upon his mind; and if he differed from others, it was not by careleſſneſs; he was irritable and reſentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had firſt made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain deſire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reaſon. He was ſometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The

The virtues which ſeem to have had moſt of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendſhip, in which it does not appear that he was other than he deſcribes himſelf. His fortune did not ſuffer his charity to be ſplendid and conſpicuous; but he aſſiſted Dodſley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a ſhop; and of the ſubſcription of forty pounds a year that he raiſed for Savage, twenty were paid by himſelf. He was accuſed of loving money, but his love was eagerneſs to gain, not ſolicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendſhip he was zealous and conſtant: his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himſelf, and therefore, without attaining any conſiderable length of life, he ſaw many companions of his youth ſink into the grave; but it does not appear that he loſt a ſingle friend by coldneſs or by injury; thoſe who loved him once, continued their kindneſs. His ungrateful mention of Allen in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondneſs. His violation

violation of the truſt repoſed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconſiſtent with the warmeſt affection; he either thought the action ſo near to indifferent that he forgot it, or ſo laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with ſuch confidence as almoſt to enforce belief, that in the papers intruſted to his executors was found a defamatory Life of Swift, which he had prepared as an inſtrument of vengeance to be uſed, if any provocation ſhould be ever given. About this I enquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who aſſured me that no ſuch piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the Church of Rome, to which in his correſpondence with Racine he profeſſes himſelf a ſincere adherent. That he was not ſcrupulouſly pious in ſome part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of ſentences taken from the Scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneneſs, and a witty man diſdains for its eaſineſs and vulgarity. But

to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever loſt his belief of Revelation. The poſitions which he tranſmitted from Bolingbroke he ſeems not to have underſtood, and was pleaſed with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of ſuch exalted ſuperiority, and ſo little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquences obſerved and aggravated: thoſe who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingneſs with which the ſame man is allowed to poſſeſs many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was in his early life a man of great literary curioſity; and when he wrote his *Eſſay on Criticiſm* had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it ſeems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was leſs attentive to dead maſters; he ſtudied in the academy of Paracelſus, and made the univerſe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions freſh from

from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of Nature. Yet there is no reaſon to believe that literature ever loſt his eſteem; he always profeſſed to love reading; and Dobſon, who ſpent ſome time at his houſe tranſlating his *Eſſay on Man*, when I aſked him what learning he found him to poſſeſs, anſwered, *More than I expected.* His frequent references to hiſtory, his alluſions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images ſelected from art and nature, with his obſervations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, ſhew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excurſive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to purſue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curioſity aroſe the deſire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verſes to Jervas, and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the conſtituent and fundamental principle was Good Senſe, a prompt and intuitive perception of conſonance and propriety. He ſaw immedi-

ately, of his own conceptions, what was to be choſen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be ſhunned, and what was to be copied.

But good ſenſe alone is a ſedate and quieſcent quality, which manages its poſſeſſions well, but does not increaſe them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preſerves ſafety, but never gains ſupremacy. Pope had likewiſe genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always inveſtigating, always aſpiring; in its wideſt ſearches ſtill longing to go forward, in its higheſt flights ſtill wiſhing to be higher; always imagining ſomething greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To aſſiſt theſe powers, he is ſaid to have had great ſtrength and exactneſs of memory. That which he had heard or read was not eaſily loſt; and he had before him not only what his own meditation ſuggeſted, but what he had found in other writers, that might be accommodated to his preſent purpoſe.

Theſe benefits of nature he improved by inceſſant and unwearied diligence; he had recourſe

courſe to every ſource of intelligence, and loſt no opportunity of information; he conſulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compoſitions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He conſidered poetry as the buſineſs of his life, and however he might ſeem to lament his occupation, he followed it with conſtancy; to make verſes was his firſt labour, and to mend them was his laſt.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If converſation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expreſſion more happy than was common, roſe to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent diſtich was preſerved for an opportunity of inſertion, and ſome little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at ſome other time.

He was one of thoſe few whoſe labour is their pleaſure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never

paſſed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by deſpair. He laboured his works firſt to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of compoſition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate uſe of the pen, form and poliſh large maſſes by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his cuſtom was to pour out a great number of verſes in the morning, and paſs the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his tranſlation, was to write his firſt thoughts in his firſt words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With ſuch faculties, and ſuch diſpoſitions, he excelled every other writer in *poetical prudence*; he wrote in ſuch a manner as might expoſe him to few hazards. He uſed almoſt always the ſame fabrick of verſe; and, indeed, by thoſe few eſſays which he made of

any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain conſequence was readineſs and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had in his mind a ſyſtematical arrangement; having always the ſame uſe for words, he had words ſo ſelected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increaſe of facility he confeſſed himſelf to have perceived in the progreſs of his tranſlation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effuſions were always voluntary, and his ſubjects choſen by himſelf. His independence ſecured him from drudging at a taſk, and labouring upon a barren topick: he never exchanged praiſe for money, nor opened a ſhop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were ſcarce ever temporary. He ſuffered coronations and royal marriages to paſs without a ſong, and derived no opportunities from recent events, or popularity from the accidental diſpoſition of his readers. He was never reduced to the neceſſity of ſoliciting the ſun to ſhine upon a birth-day, of calling the Graces and Virtues to a wedding, or of ſaying what multitudes have ſaid

before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be ſilent.

His publications were for the ſame reaſon never haſty. He is ſaid to have ſent nothing to the preſs till it had lain two years under his inſpection: it is at leaſt certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He ſuffered the tumult of imagination to ſubſide, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not truſt his firſt fondneſs. He conſulted his friends, and liſtened with great willingneſs to criticiſm; and, what was of more importance, he conſulted himſelf, and let nothing paſs againſt his own judgement.

He profeſſed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was preſented, he praiſed through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive ſome illuſtration, if he be compared with his maſter.

Integrity of underſtanding and nicety of diſcernment were not allotted in a leſs pro-

portion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was ſufficiently ſhewn by the diſmiſſion of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never deſired to apply all the judgement that he had. He wrote, and profeſſed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleaſed others, he contented himſelf. He ſpent no time in ſtruggles to rouſe latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he muſt have known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little conſideration; when occaſion or neceſſity called upon him, he poured out what the preſent moment happened to ſupply, and, when once it had paſſed the preſs, ejected it from his mind; for when he had no pecuniary intereſt, he had no further ſolicitude.

Pope was not content to ſatisfy; he deſired to excel, and therefore always endeavoured to do his beſt: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgement of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he ſhewed none to himſelf. He examined lines and

and words with minute and punctilious obſervation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reaſon he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he conſidered and reconſidered them. The only poems which can be ſuppoſed to have been written with ſuch regard to the times as might haſten their publication, were the two ſatires of *Thirty-eight*; of which Dodſley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Every line," ſaid he, "was then written twice over; I "gave him a clean tranſcript, which he ſent "ſome time afterwards to me for the preſs, "with every line written twice over a ſecond "time."

His declaration, that his care for his works ceaſed at their publication, was not ſtrictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiſs in the firſt edition, he ſilently corrected in thoſe that followed. He appears to have reviſed the *Iliad*, and freed it from ſome of its imperfections; and

and the *Eſſay on Criticiſm* received many improvements after its firſt appearance. It will ſeldom be found that he altered without adding clearneſs, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgement of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the ſuperiority muſt be allowed to Dryden, whoſe education was more ſcholaſtick, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for ſtudy, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illuſtrations from a more extenſive circumference of ſcience. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehenſive ſpeculation, and thoſe of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the ſole praiſe of either; for both excelled likewiſe in proſe; but Pope did not borrow his proſe from his predeceſ-

ſor.

ſor. The ſtyle of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope conſtrains his mind to his own rules of compoſition. Dryden is ſometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always ſmooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, riſing into inequalities, and diverſified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, ſhaven by the ſcythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which conſtitutes a poet; that quality without which judgement is cold and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the ſuperiority muſt, with ſome heſitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, becauſe Dryden had more; for every other writer ſince Milton muſt give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it muſt be ſaid, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always haſty, either excited by ſome external occaſion, or extorted by

domeſtick

domeſtick neceſſity; he compoſed without conſideration, and publiſhed without correction. What his mind could ſupply at call, or gather in one excurſion, was all that he ſought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condenſe his ſentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that ſtudy might produce, or chance might ſupply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and conſtant. Dryden often ſurpaſſes expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent aſtoniſhment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well conſidered, be found juſt; and if the reader ſhould ſuſpect me, as I ſuſpect myſelf, of ſome partial fondneſs for the memory of Dryden, let him not too haſtily condemn me; for meditation and enquiry may, perhaps, ſhew him the reaſonableneſs of my determination.

THE

THE Works of Pope are now to be diſtinctly examined, not ſo much with attention to ſlight faults or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It ſeems natural for a young poet to initiate himſelf by Paſtorals, which, not profeſſing to imitate real life, require no experience, and, exhibiting only the ſimple operation of unmingled paſſions, admit no ſubtle reaſoning or deep enquiry. Pope's Paſtorals are not however compoſed but with cloſe thought; they have reference to the times of the day, the ſeaſons of the year, and the periods of human life. The laſt, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favourite. To tell of diſappointment and miſery, to thicken the darkneſs of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably

probably juſt. I wiſh, however, that his fondneſs had not overlooked a line in which the *Zephyrs* are made *to lament in ſilence*.

To charge theſe Paſtorals with want of invention, is to require what never was intended. The imitations are ſo ambitiouſly frequent, that the writer evidently means rather to ſhew his literature than his wit. It is ſurely ſufficient for an author of ſixteen not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious ſelection, but to have obtained ſufficient power of language, and ſkill in metre, to exhibit a ſeries of verſification, which had in Engliſh poetry no precedent, nor has ſince had an imitation.

The deſign of *Windſor Foreſt* is evidently derived from *Cooper's Hill*, with ſome attention to Waller's poem on *The Park*; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his maſters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging deſcription, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, of a regular ſubordination of parts terminating in the principal and original deſign. There is this want in moſt deſcriptive

ſcriptive poems, becauſe the ſcenes, which they muſt exhibit ſucceſſively, are all ſubſiſting at the ſame time, and therefore the order in which they are ſhewn muſt by neceſſity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the laſt part than from the firſt. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by ſuſpenſe, muſt be excited by diverſity, ſuch as his poem offers to its reader.

But the deſire of diverſity may be too much indulged; the parts of *Windſor Foreſt* which deſerve leaſt praiſe, are thoſe which were added to enliven the ſtillneſs of the ſcene, the appearance of Father Thames, and the tranſformation of *Lodona*. Addiſon had in his *Campaign* derided the *Rivers* that *riſe from their oozy beds* to tell ſtories of heroes, and it is therefore ſtrange that Pope ſhould adopt a fiction not only unnatural but lately cenſured. The ſtory of *Lodona* is told with great ſweetneſs; but a new metamorphoſis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is eaſier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

The

The *Temple of Fame* has, as Steele warmly declared, *a thouſand beauties*. Every part is ſplendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original viſion of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the allegory is very ſkilfully continued, the imagery is properly ſelected, and learnedly diſplayed: yet, with all this comprehenſion of excellence, as its ſcene is laid in remote ages, and its ſentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it ſeems never to have obtained much notice, but is turned ſilently over, and ſeldom quoted or mentioned with either praiſe or blame.

That the *Meſſiah* excels the *Pollio* is no great praiſe, if it be conſidered from what original the improvements are derived.

The *Verſes on the unfortunate Lady* have drawn much attention by the illaudable ſingularity of treating ſuicide with reſpect; and they muſt be allowed to be written in ſome parts with vigorous animation, and in others with gentle tenderneſs; nor has Pope pro-

duced any poem in which the ſenſe predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not ſkilfully told; it is not eaſy to diſcover the character of either the Lady or her Guardian. Hiſtory relates that ſhe was about to diſparage herſelf by a marriage with an inferior; Pope praiſes her for the dignity of ambition, and yet condemns the unkle to deteſtation for his pride; though the ambitious love of a niece may be oppoſed by the intereſt, malice, or envy of an unkle, but never by his pride. On ſuch an occaſion a poet may be allowed to be obſcure, but inconſiſtency never can be right.

The *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* was undertaken at the deſire of Steele: in this the author is generally confeſſed to have miſcarried, yet he has miſcarried only as compared with Dryden; for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better choſen; hiſtory will always take ſtronger hold of the attention than fable: the paſſions excited by Dryden are the pleaſures and pains of real life, the ſcene of Pope is laid in imaginary exiſtence; Pope is read with calm acquieſcence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon

the ear, and Dryden finds the paſſes of the mind.

Both the odes want the eſſential conſtituent of metrical compoſitions, the ſtated recurrence of ſettled numbers. It may be alleged, that Pindar is ſaid by Horace to have written *numeris lege ſolutis*; but as no ſuch lax performances have been tranſmitted to us, the meaning of that expreſſion cannot be fixed; and perhaps the like return might properly be made to a modern Pindariſt, as Mr. Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his criticiſms upon a Greek Exerciſe, which Cobb had preſented, refuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out at laſt, *Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one.*

If Pope's ode be particularly inſpected, it will be found that the firſt ſtanza conſiſts of ſounds well choſen indeed, but only ſounds.

The ſecond conſiſts of hyperbolical common-places, eaſily to be found, and perhaps without much difficulty to be as well expreſſed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour, not unworthy the antagoniſt of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the beſt.

The next ſtanzas place and detain us in the dark and diſmal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor ſorrow, can be found: the poet however faithfully attends us; we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction, or ſweetneſs of verſification; but what can form avail without better matter?

The laſt ſtanza recurs again to common places. The concluſion is too evidently modelled by that of Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the ſame fault, the compariſon of each is literal on one ſide, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always expreſs their own thoughts; Pope, with all this labour in the praiſe of Muſick, was ignorant of its principles, and inſenſible of its effects.

One

One of his greateſt though of his earlieſt works is the *Eſſay on Criticiſm*, which, if he had written nothing elſe, would have placed him among the firſt criticks and the firſt poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embelliſh or dignify didactick compoſition, ſelection of matter, novelty of arrangement, juſtneſs of precept, ſplendour of illuſtration, and propriety of digreſſion. I know not whether it be pleaſing to conſider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it: he that delights himſelf with obſerving that ſuch powers may be ſo ſoon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a ſtand.

To mention the particular beauties of the Eſſay would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear to obſerve, that the compariſon of a ſtudent's progreſs in the ſciences with the journey of a traveller in the Alps, is perhaps the beſt that Engliſh poetry can ſhew. A ſimile, to be perfect, muſt both illuſtrate and ennoble the ſubject; muſt ſhew it to the underſtanding in a clearer view, and diſplay it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either

of theſe qualities may be ſufficient to recommend it. In didactick poetry, of which the great purpoſe is inſtruction, a ſimile may be praiſed which illuſtrates, though it does not ennoble; in heroicks, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illuſtrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleaſing image; for a ſimile is ſaid to be a ſhort epiſode. To this antiquity was ſo attentive, that circumſtances were ſometimes added, which, having no parallels, ſerved only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicrouſly called *compariſons with a long tail.* In their ſimilies the greateſt writers have ſometimes failed; the ſhip-race, compared with the chariot-race, is neither illuſtrated nor aggrandiſed; land and water make all the difference: when Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chaſing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of purſuit and flight are too plain to be made plainer, and a god and the daughter of a god are not repreſented much to their advantage, by a hare and dog. The ſimile of the Alps has no uſeleſs parts, yet affords a ſtriking picture by itſelf; it makes the foregoing

going poſition better underſtood, and enables it to take faſter hold on the attention; it aſſiſts the apprehenſion, and elevates the fancy.

Let me likewiſe dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph, in which it is directed that *the ſound ſhould ſeem an echo to the ſenſe*; a precept which Pope is allowed to have obſerved beyond any other Engliſh poet.

This notion of repreſentative metre, and the deſire of diſcovering frequent adaptations of the ſound to the ſenſe, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furniſh this repreſentation are the ſounds of the words conſidered ſingly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has ſome words framed to exhibit the noiſes which they expreſs, as *thump*, *rattle*, *growl*, *hiſs*. Theſe however are but few, and the poet cannot make them more, nor can they be of any uſe but when ſound is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was in the dactylick meaſures of the learned languages capable of conſiderable variety; but that variety could

be accommodated only to motion or duration, and different degrees of motion were perhaps expreſſed by verſes rapid or ſlow, with very little attention of the writer, when the image had full poſſeſſion of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verſes can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied reſemblances, I fear, ariſe ſometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is ſuppoſed to be ſome relation between a *ſoft* line and a *ſoft* couch, or between *hard* ſyllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion, however, may be in ſome ſort exemplified; and yet it may be ſuſpected that even in ſuch reſemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the ſounds are eſtimated by their meaning. One of the moſt ſucceſsful attempts has been to deſcribe the labour of Siſyphus:

With many a weary ſtep, and many a groan,
Up a high hill he heaves a huge round ſtone;
The huge round ſtone, reſulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and ſmoaks along the ground.

Who

Who does not perceive the ſtone to move ſlowly upward, and roll violently back? But ſet the ſame numbers to another ſenſe;

While many a merry tale, and many a ſong,
Chear'd the rough road, we wiſh'd the rough road long,
The rough road then, returning in a round,
Mock'd our impatient ſteps, for all was fairy ground.

We have now ſurely loſt much of the delay, and much of the rapidity.

But to ſhew how little the greateſt maſter of numbers can fix the principles of repreſentative harmony, it will be ſufficient to remark that the poet, who tells us, that

When Ajax ſtrives—the words move ſlow.
Not ſo when ſwift Camilla ſcours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and ſkims along the main;

when he had enjoyed for about thirty years the praiſe of Camilla's lightneſs of foot, tried another experiment upon *ſound* and *time*, and produced this memorable triplet;

Waller

> Waller was ſmooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verſe, the full reſounding line,
> The long majeſtick march, and energy divine.

Here are the ſwiftneſs of the rapid race, and the march of ſlow-paced majeſty, exhibited by the ſame poet in the ſame ſequence of ſyllables, except that the exact proſodiſt will find the line of *ſwiftneſs* by one time longer than that of *tardineſs*.

Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and when real, are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected, and not to be ſolicited.

To the praiſes which have been accumulated on *The Rape of the Lock* by readers of every claſs, from the critick to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is univerſally allowed to be the moſt attractive of all ludicrous compoſitions, let it rather be now enquired from what ſources the power of pleaſing is derived.

Dr. Warburton, who excelled in critical perſpicacity, has remarked that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purpoſes

purpoſes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention: we ſhould have turned away from a conteſt between Venus and Diana; the employment of allegorical perſons always excites conviction of its own abſurdity; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions; when the phantom is put in motion, it diſſolves; thus *Diſcord* may raiſe a mutiny, but *Diſcord* cannot conduct a march, nor beſiege a town. Pope brought into view a new race of Beings, with powers and paſſions proportionate to their operation. The ſylphs and gnomes act at the toilet and the tea-table; what more terrifick and more powerful phantoms perform on the ſtormy ocean, or the field of battle, they give their proper help, and do their proper miſchief.

Pope is ſaid, by an objector, not to have been the inventer of this petty nation; a charge which might with more juſtice have been brought againſt the author of the *Iliad*, who doubtleſs adopted the religious ſyſtem of his country; for what is there but the names of his agents which Pope has not invented? Has he not aſſigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not,

at

at leaſt, given them their firſt poetical exiſtence? If this is not ſufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written.

In this work are exhibited, in a very high degree, the two moſt engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people, never heard of before, is preſented to us in a manner ſo clear and eaſy, that the reader ſeeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their intereſts, and attends their purſuits, loves a ſylph, and deteſts a gnome.

That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The ſubject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not ſeen ſo often as to be no longer regarded, yet the whole detail of a female-day is here brought before us inveſted with ſo much art of decoration, that, though nothing is diſguiſed, every thing is ſtriking, and we feel all the appetite of curioſity for that from which

which we have a thouſand times turned faſtidiouſly away.

The purpoſe of the Poet is, as he tells us, to laugh at *the little unguarded follies of the female ſex.* It is therefore without juſtice that Dennis charges the *Rape of the Lock* with the want of a moral, and for that reaſon ſets it below the *Lûtrin*, which expoſes the pride and diſcord of the clergy. Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau has made the world much better than he found it; but if they had both ſucceeded, it were eaſy to tell who would have deſerved moſt from publick gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and ſpleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in diſcord, and fill houſes with diſquiet, do more to obſtruct the happineſs of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries. It has been well obſerved, that the miſery of man proceeds not from any ſingle cruſh of overwhelming evil, but from ſmall vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewiſe, that the machinery is ſuperfluous; that, by all the buſtle of preternatural operation, the main

event is neither haſtened nor retarded. To this charge an efficacious anſwer is not eaſily made. The ſylphs cannot be ſaid to help or to oppoſe, and it muſt be allowed to imply ſome want of art, that their power has not been ſufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may likewiſe be charged with want of connection; the game at *ombre* might be ſpared, but if the Lady had loſt her hair while ſhe was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that thoſe who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important intereſts. Thoſe perhaps are faults; but what are ſuch faults to ſo much excellence!

The Epiſtle of *Eloiſe to Abelard* is one of the moſt happy productions of human wit: the ſubject is ſo judiciouſly choſen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another which ſo many circumſtances concur to recommend. We regularly intereſt ourſelves moſt in the fortune of thoſe who moſt deſerve our notice. Abelard and Eloiſe were conſpicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and misfortunes

of

of this illuſtrious pair are known from undiſputed hiſtory. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeleſs dejection; for they both found quiet and conſolation in retirement and piety. So new and ſo affecting is their ſtory, that it ſuperſedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty without ſtraggling into ſcenes of fable.

The ſtory, thus ſkilfully adopted, has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him, which ſeems more the effect of ſtudious perſeverance and laborious reviſal. Here is particularly obſervable the *curioſa felicitas*, a fruitful ſoil, and careful cultivation. Here is no crudeneſs of ſenſe, nor aſperity of language.

The ſources from which ſentiments, which have ſo much vigour and efficacy, have been drawn, are ſhewn to be the myſtick writers by the learned author of the *Eſſay on the Life and Writings of Pope*; a book which teaches how the brow of Criticiſm may be ſmoothed, and how ſhe may be enabled, with all her ſeverity, to attract and to delight.

The

The train of my diſquiſition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the tranſlation of the *Iliad*; a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks tranſlation was almoſt unknown; it was totally unknown to the inhabitants of Greece. They had no recourſe to the Barbarians for poetical beauties, but ſought for every thing in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little which they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent tranſlators; but I can hear of no verſion, unleſs perhaps Anguillara's Ovid may be excepted, which is read with eagerneſs. The *Iliad* of Salvini every reader may diſcover to be punctiliouſly exact; but it ſeems to be the work of a linguiſt ſkilfully pedantick, and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to pleaſe, reject it with diſguſt.

Their predeceſſors the Romans have left ſome ſpecimens of tranſlation behind them, and that employment muſt have had ſome credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged; but unleſs we ſuppoſe, what is perhaps

haps true, that the plays of Terence were verſions of Menander, nothing tranſlated ſeems ever to have riſen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably induſtrious to enrich their own language with the learning of the ancients; but found themſelves reduced, by whatever neceſſity, to turn the Greek and Roman poetry into proſe. Whoever could read an author, could tranſlate him. From ſuch rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this arduous undertaking was drawn from the verſions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer, and part of the debt was now paid by his tranſlator. Pope ſearched the pages of Dryden for happy combinations of heroic diction; but it will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with ſo much diligence and art, that he has left in his *Homer* a treaſure of poetical elegancies to poſterity. His verſion may be ſaid to have tuned the Engliſh tongue; for ſince its appearance no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a

ſeries of lines ſo elaborately corrected, and ſo ſweetly modulated, took poſſeſſion of the publick ear; the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the tranſlation.

But in the moſt general applauſe diſcordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected by ſome, who wiſh to be numbered among the ſons of learning, that Pope's verſion of Homer is not Homerical; that it exhibits no reſemblance of the original and characteriſtick manner of the Father of Poetry, as it wants his awful ſimplicity, his artleſs grandeur, his unaffected majeſty. This cannot be totally denied; but it muſt be remembered that *neceſſitas quod cogit defendit*; that may be lawfully done which cannot be forborn. Time and place will always enforce regard. In eſtimating this tranſlation, conſideration muſt be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and, above all, of the change which two thouſand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the ſame general fabrick with that of Homer, in verſes of the ſame meaſure, and in an age

age nearer to Homer's time by eighteen hundred years; yet he found, even then, the ſtate of the world ſo much altered, and the demand for elegance ſo much increaſed, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and perhaps, in the multitude of borrowed paſſages, very few can be ſhewn which he has not embelliſhed.

There is a time when nations emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular ſubordination, gain leiſure to grow wiſe, and feel the ſhame of ignorance and the craving pain of unſatisfied curioſity. To this hunger of the mind plain ſenſe is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneaſineſs, and to be free from pain for a while is pleaſure; but repletion generates faſtidiouſneſs; a ſaturated intellect ſoon becomes luxurious, and knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, as learning advances, that in all nations the firſt writers are ſimple, and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for another, and what was expedient to Virgil was neceſſary to Pope.

I ſuppoſe many readers of the Engliſh *Iliad*, when they have been touched with ſome unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer doubtleſs owes to his tranſlator many *Ovidian* graces not exactly ſuitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is ſurely to be deſired, if it be not gained at the expence of dignity. A hero would wiſh to be loved, as well as to be reverenced.

To a thouſand cavils one anſwer is ſufficient; the purpoſe of a writer is to be read, and the criticiſm which would deſtroy the power of pleaſing muſt be blown aſide. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew that it was neceſſary to colour the images and point the ſentiments of his author; he therefore made him graceful, but loſt him ſome of his ſublimity.

The copious notes with which the verſion is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though they

were undoubtedly written to ſwell the volumes, ought not to paſs without praiſe: commentaries which attract the reader by the pleaſure of peruſal have not often appeared; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties, thoſe of Pope to vary entertainment.

It has however been objected, with ſufficient reaſon, that there is in the commentary too much of unſeaſonable levity and affected gaiety; that too many appeals are made to the Ladies, and the eaſe which is ſo carefully preſerved is ſometimes the eaſe of a trifler. Every art has its terms, and every kind of inſtruction its proper ſtyle; the gravity of common criticks may be tedious, but is leſs deſpicable than childiſh merriment.

Of the *Odyſſey* nothing remains to be obſerved: the ſame general praiſe may be given to both tranſlations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were written by Broome, who endeavoured not unſucceſsfully to imitate his maſter.

Of the *Dunciad* the hint is confeſſedly taken from Dryden's *Mac Flecno*; but the

plan is ſo enlarged and diverſified as juſtly to claim the praiſe of an original, and affords perhaps the beſt ſpecimen that has yet appeared of perſonal ſatire ludicrouſly pompous.

That the deſign was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himſelf, I am not convinced. The firſt motive was the deſire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his *Shakſpeare*, and regaining the honour which he had loſt, by cruſhing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and therefore it was neceſſary to find other enemies with other names, at whoſe expence he might divert the publick.

In this deſign there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himſelf uncalled before the tribunal of Criticiſm, and ſolicits fame at the hazard of diſgrace. Dulneſs or deformity are not culpable in themſelves, but may be very juſtly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to paſs without reprehenſion, what ſhould reſtrain them? *impune*

impune diem conſumpſerit ingens Telephus; and upon bad writers only will cenſure have much effect. The ſatire which brought Theobald and Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam thrown at Neoptolemus.

All truth is valuable, and ſatirical criticiſm may be conſidered as uſeful when it rectifies error and improves judgement; he that refines the publick taſte is a publick benefactor.

The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the groſſneſs of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas phyſically impure, ſuch as every other tongue utters with unwillingneſs, and of which every ear ſhrinks from the mention.

But even this fault, offenſive as it is, may be forgiven for the excellence of other paſſages; ſuch as the formation and diſſolution of Moore, the account of the Traveller, the misfortune of the Floriſt, and the crouded thoughts and ſtately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph.

The alterations which have been made in the *Dunciad*, not always for the better, require that it ſhould be publiſhed, as in the laſt collection, with all its variations.

The *Eſſay on Man* was a work of great labour and long conſideration, but certainly not the happieſt of Pope's performances. The ſubject is perhaps not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not ſufficiently maſter of his ſubject; metaphyſical morality was a new ſtudy, and he was proud of his acquiſitions, and, ſuppoſing himſelf maſter of great ſecrets, was in haſte to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the firſt Epiſtle, that from the nature of the Supreme Being may be deduced an order of beings ſuch as mankind, becauſe Infinite Excellence can do only what is beſt. He finds out that *all the queſtion is whether man be in a wrong place.* Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitian reaſoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only becauſe he is, we may allow that his place is the right place, becauſe he has it: Supreme Wiſdom is not leſs infallible in diſpoſing than in creating. But what is meant by

by *ſomewhere* and *place*, and *wrong place*, it had been vain to aſk Pope, who probably had never aſked himſelf.

Having exalted himſelf into the chair of wiſdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himſelf; that we ſee but little, and that the order of the univerſe is beyond our comprehenſion; an opinion not very uncommon; and that there is a chain of ſubordinate beings *from infinite to nothing*, of which himſelf and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which, without his help, he ſuppoſes unattainable, the poſition *that though we are fools, yet God is wiſe.*

This Eſſay affords an egregious inſtance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling ſplendour of imagery, and the ſeductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of ſentiment ſo happily diſguiſed. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurſe. When theſe wonder-working ſounds ſink into ſenſe, and

and the doctrine of the Eſſay, diſrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what ſhall we diſcover? That we are, in compariſon with our Creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of exiſtence, and that we could not make one another with more ſkill than we are made. We may learn yet more; that the arts of human life were copied from the inſtinctive operations of other animals; that if the world be made for man, it may be ſaid that man was made for geeſe. To theſe profound principles of natural knowledge are added ſome moral inſtructions equally new; that ſelf-intereſt, well underſtood, will produce ſocial concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits; that evil is ſometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unſtable and fallacious, of uncertain duration, and doubtful effects; that our true honour is, not to have a great part, but to act it well; that virtue only is our own; and that happineſs is always in our power.

Surely a man of no very comprehenſive ſearch may venture to ſay that he has heard all this before; but it was never till now recommended

commended by ſuch a blaze of embelliſhment, or ſuch ſweetneſs of melody. The vigorous contraction of ſome thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illuſtrations, and ſometimes the dignity, ſometimes the ſoftneſs of the verſes, enchain philoſophy, ſuſpend criticiſm, and oppreſs judgement by overpowering pleaſure.

This is true of many paragraphs; yet if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of compoſition before a rigid critick, I ſhould not ſelect the *Eſſay on Man*; for it contains more lines unſucceſsfully laboured, more harſhneſs of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expreſſed, more levity without elegance, and more heavineſs without ſtrength, than will eaſily be found in all his other works.

The *Characters of Men and Women* are the product of diligent ſpeculation upon human life; much labour has been beſtowed upon them, and Pope very ſeldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly eſtimated, I recommend a compariſon of his *Characters of Women* with Boileau's Satire; it will then be ſeen with how much more perſpicacity

ſpicacity female nature is inveſtigated, and female excellence ſelected; and he ſurely is no mean writer to whom Boileau ſhall be found inferior. The *Characters of Men*, however, are written with more, if not with deeper, thought, and exhibit many paſſages exquiſitely beautiful. The *Gem and the Flower* will not eaſily be equalled. In the women's part are ſome defects; the character of *Attoſſa* is not ſo neatly finiſhed as that of *Clodio*; and ſome of the female characters may be found perhaps more frequently among men; what is ſaid of *Philomede* was true of *Prior*.

In the Epiſtles to Lord Bathurſt and Lord Burlington, Dr. Warburton has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer's head, and, to ſupport his hypotheſis, has printed that firſt which was publiſhed laſt. In one, the moſt valuable paſſage is perhaps the Elogy on *Good Senſe*, and the other the *End of the Duke of Buckingham*.

The Epiſtle to Arbuthnot, now arbitrarily called the *Prologue to the Satires*, is a performance conſiſting, as it ſeems, of many fragments wrought into one deſign, which by this

this union of ſcattered beauties contains more ſtriking paragraphs than could probably have been brought together into an occaſional work. As there is no ſtronger motive to exertion than ſelf-defence, no part has more elegance, ſpirit, or dignity, than the poet's vindication of his own character. The meaneſt paſſage is the ſatire upon *Sporus*.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the year, and which are called the *Epilogue to the Satires*, it was very juſtly remarked by Savage, that the ſecond was in the whole more ſtrongly conceived, and more equally ſupported, but that it had no ſingle paſſages equal to the contention in the firſt for the dignity of Vice, and the celebration of the triumph of Corruption.

The Imitations of Horace ſeem to have been written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate as he could the ſentiments of an old author to recent facts or familiar images; but what is eaſy is ſeldom excellent; ſuch imitations cannot

not give pleaſure to common readers; the man of learning may be ſometimes ſurpriſed and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the compariſon requires knowledge of the original, which will likewiſe often detect ſtrained applications. Between Roman images and Engliſh manners there will be an irreconcileable diſſimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-coloured; neither original nor tranſlated, neither ancient nor modern.

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjuſted to each other, all the qualities that conſtitute genius. He had *Invention*, by which new trains of events are formed, and new ſcenes of imagery diſplayed, as in the *Rape of the Lock*; or extrinſick and adventitious embelliſhments and illuſtrations are connected with a known ſubject, as in the *Eſſay on Criticiſm*. He had *Imagination*, which ſtrongly impreſſes on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader, the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of paſſion, as in his *Eloiſa*, *Windſor Foreſt*, and the *Ethick Epiſtles*. He had *Judgement*, which ſelects from life or nature what the preſent purpoſe

purpoſe requires, and, by ſeparating the eſſence of things from its concomitants, often makes the repreſentation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expreſſion, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's ſentiments and deſcriptions.

Poetical expreſſion includes ſound as well as meaning; *Muſick*, ſays Dryden, *is inarticulate poetry*; among the excellencies of Pope, therefore, muſt be mentioned the melody of his metre. By peruſing the works of Dryden, he diſcovered the moſt perfect fabrick of Engliſh verſe, and habituated himſelf to that only which he found the beſt; in conſequence of which reſtraint, his poetry has been cenſured as too uniformly muſical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried ſweetneſs. I ſuſpect this objection to be the cant of thoſe who judge by principles rather than perception; and who would even themſelves have leſs pleaſure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by ſtudied diſcords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauſes.

But

But though he was thus careful of his verſification, he did not oppreſs his powers with ſuperfluous rigour. He ſeems to have thought with Boileau, that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty ſhould overbalance the advantage. The conſtruction of his language is not always ſtrictly grammatical; with thoſe rhymes which preſcription had conjoined he contented himſelf, without regard to Swift's remonſtrances, though there was no ſtriking conſonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuſe admiſſion at a ſmall diſtance to the ſame rhymes.

To Swift's edict for the excluſion of Alexandrines and Triplets he paid little regard; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uſes them more liberally in his tranſlation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes; but always, I think, unſucceſsfully, except once in the *Rape of the Lock*.

Expletives he very early ejected from his verſes; but he now and then admits an epithet rather

rather commodious than important. Each of the ſix firſt lines of the *Iliad* might loſe two ſyllables with very little diminution of the meaning; and ſometimes, after all his art and labour, one verſe ſeems to be made for the ſake of another.

I have been told that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be moſt gratified was this:

Lo, where Mœotis ſleeps, and hardly flows
The freezing Tanais through a waſte of ſnows.

But the reaſon of this preference I cannot diſcover.

It is remarked by Watts, that there is ſcarcely a happy combination of words, or a phraſe poetically elegant in the Engliſh language, which Pope has not inſerted into his verſion of Homer. How he obtained poſſeſſion of ſo many beauties of ſpeech, it were deſirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obſcure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or uſeful, and preſerved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely.

When, in his laſt years, Hall's Satires were ſhewn him, he wiſhed that he had ſeen them ſooner.

New ſentiments and new images others may produce; but to attempt any further improvement of verſification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their beſt, and what ſhall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needleſs curioſity.

After all this, it is ſurely ſuperfluous to anſwer the queſtion that has once been aſked, Whether Pope was a poet? otherwiſe than by aſking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumſcribe poetry by a definition will only ſhew the narrowneſs of the definer, though a definition which ſhall exclude Pope will not eaſily be made. Let us look round upon the preſent time, and back upon the paſt; let us enquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims ſtated, and the pretenſions of Pope will be no more diſputed. Had he given the world only his verſion, the name of poet muſt have

been allowed him: if the writer of the *Iliad* were to claſs his ſucceſſors, he would aſſign a very high place to his tranſlator, without requiring any other evidence of Genius.

THE following Letter, of which the original is in the hands of Lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindneſs of Mr. Jodrell.

" To Mr. BRIDGES, at the Biſhop of
" London's at Fulham.

" SIR,

" The favour of your Letter, with your Remarks, can never be enough acknowledged; and the ſpeed, with which you diſcharged ſo troubleſome a taſk, doubles the obligation.

" I muſt own, you have pleaſed me very much by the commendations ſo ill beſtowed upon me; but, I aſſure you, much more by the frankneſs of your cenſure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is

more advantageous to a ſcribler to be improved in his judgement than to be ſoothed in his vanity. The greater part of thoſe deviations from the Greek, which you have obſerved, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes; who are (it ſeems) as much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decryed for the badneſs of their tranſlations. Chapman pretends to have reſtored the genuine ſenſe of the author, from the miſtakes of all former explainers, in ſeveral hundred places: and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer, in Greek and Latin, attributed ſo much to Hobbes, that they confeſs they have corrected the old Latin interpretation very often by his verſion. For my part, I generally took the author's meaning to be as you have explained it; yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectneſs in the language, over-ruled me. However, Sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, becauſe you happen to be of my opinion: (for men (let them ſay what they will) never approve any other's ſenſe, but as it ſquares with their own.) But you have made me much more proud of, and poſitive in my judgement, ſince it is ſtrengthened by yours.

I think

I think your criticiſms, which regard the expreſſion, very juſt, and ſhall make my profit of them: to give you ſome proof that I am in earneſt, I will alter three verſes on your bare objection, though I have Mr. Dryden's example for each of them. And this, I hope, you will account no ſmall piece of obedience, from one, who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty critics or commentators. But though I ſpeak thus of commentators, I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of critical underſtanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greateſt of them are certainly thoſe of the Invention and Deſign, which are not at all confined to the language: for the diſtinguiſhing excellencies of Homer are (by the conſent of the beſt critics of all nations) firſt in the manners, (which include all the ſpeeches, as being no other than the repreſentations of each perſon's manners by his words:) and then in that rapture and fire, which carries you away with him, with that wonderful force, that no man who has a true poetical ſpirit is maſter of himſelf, while he reads him, Homer makes you intereſted

and concerned before you are aware, all at once; whereas Virgil does it by ſoft degrees. This, I believe, is what a tranſlator of Homer ought principally to imitate; and it is very hard for any tranſlator to come up to it, becauſe the chief reaſon why all tranſlations fall ſhort of their originals is, that the very conſtraint they are obliged to, renders them heavy and diſpirited.

" The great beauty of Homer's language, as I take it, conſiſts in that noble ſimplicity, which runs through all his works; (and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine conſiſtent with ſimplicity, is at the ſame time very copious.) I don't know how I have run into this pedantry in a Letter, but I find I have ſaid too much, as well as ſpoken too inconſiderately; what farther thoughts I have upon this ſubject, I ſhall be glad to communicate to you (for my own improvement) when we meet; which is a happineſs I very earneſtly deſire, as I do likewiſe ſome opportunity of proving how much I think myſelf obliged to your friendſhip, and how truly I am, Sir,

Your moſt faithful, humble ſervant,

A. POPE."

THE Criticiſm upon Pope's Epitaphs, which was printed in *The Viſitor*, is placed here, being too minute and particular to be inſerted in the Life.

EVERY Art is beſt taught by example. Nothing contributes more to the cultivation of propriety than remarks on the works of thoſe who have moſt excelled. I ſhall therefore endeavour, at this *viſit*, to entertain the young ſtudents in poetry, with an examination of Pope's Epitaphs.

To define an epitaph is uſeleſs; every one knows that it is an inſcription on a tomb. An epitaph, therefore, implies no particular character of writing, but may be compoſed in verſe or proſe. It is indeed commonly panegyrical; becauſe we are ſeldom diſtinguiſhed with a ſtone but by our friends; but it has no rule to reſtrain or modify it, except this, that it ought not to be longer than com-

mon beholders may be expected to have leiſure and patience to peruſe.

I.

On CHARLES *Earl of* DORSET, *in the Church of Wythyham in Suſſex.*

Dorſet, the grace of courts, the Muſe's pride,
Patron of arts, and judge of nature, dy'd.
The ſcourge of pride, though ſanctify'd or great,
Of fops in learning, and of knaves in ſtate;
Yet ſoft in nature, though ſevere his lay,
His anger moral, and his wiſdom gay.
Bleſt ſatyriſt! who touch'd the mean ſo true,
As ſhow'd, Vice had his hate and pity too.
Bleſt courtier! who could king and country pleaſe,
Yet ſacred kept his friendſhip, and his eaſe.
Bleſt peer! his great forefathers every grace
Reflecting, and reflected on his race;
Where other Buckhurſts, other Dorſets ſhine,
And patriots ſtill, or poets, deck the line.

The firſt diſtich of this epitaph contains a kind of information which few would want, that the man, for whom the tomb was erected, *died.* There are indeed ſome qualities worthy of praiſe aſcribed to the dead, but none that were likely to exempt him from the

the lot of man, or incline us much to wonder that he ſhould die. What is meant by *judge of nature*, is not eaſy to ſay. Nature is not the object of human judgement; for it is vain to judge where we cannot alter. If by nature is meant, what is commonly called *nature* by the criticks, a juſt repreſentation of things really exiſting, and actions really performed, nature cannot be properly oppoſed to *art*; nature being, in this ſenſe, only the beſt effect of *art*.

The ſcourge of pride—

Of this couplet, the ſecond line is not, what is intended, an illuſtration of the former. Pride, in the Great, is indeed well enough connected with knaves in ſtate, though knaves is a word rather too ludicrous and light; but the mention of *ſanctified* pride will not lead the thoughts to *fops in learning*, but rather to ſome ſpecies of tyranny or oppreſſion, ſomething more gloomy and more formidable than foppery.

Yet ſoft his nature—

This is a high compliment, but was not firſt beſtowed on Dorſet by Pope. The next verſe is extremely beautiful.

Bleſt

Bleſt ſatyriſt!—

In this diſtich is another line of which Pope was not the author. I do not mean to blame theſe imitations with much harſhneſs; in long performances they are ſcarcely to be avoided, and in ſhorter they may be indulged, becauſe the train of the compoſition may naturally involve them, or the ſcantineſs of the ſubject allow little choice. However, what is borrowed is not to be enjoyed as our own, and it is the buſineſs of critical juſtice to give every bird of the Muſes his proper feather.

Bleſt courtier!—

Whether a courtier can be properly commended for keeping his *eaſe ſacred*, may perhaps be diſputable. To pleaſe king and country, without ſacrificing friendſhip to any change of times, was a very uncommon inſtance of prudence or felicity, and deſerved to be kept ſeparate from ſo poor a commendation as care of his eaſe. I wiſh our poets would attend a little more accurately to the uſe of the word *ſacred*, which ſurely ſhould never be applied in a ſerious compoſition, but

but where ſome reference may be made to a higher Being, or where ſome duty is exacted or implied. A man may keep his friendſhip *ſacred*, becauſe promiſes of friendſhip are very awful ties; but methinks he cannot, but in a burleſque ſenſe, be ſaid to keep his eaſe *ſacred*.

Bleſt peer!

The bleſſing aſcribed to the *peer* has no connection with his peerage: they might happen to any other man, whoſe anceſtors were remembered, or whoſe poſterity were likely to be regarded.

I know not whether this epitaph be worthy either of the writer or of the man entombed.

II.

On Sir WILLIAM TRUMBAL, *one of the principal Secretaries of State to King* WILLIAM III. *who, having reſigned his place, died in his retirement at Eaſthamſted in Berkſhire*, 1716.

A pleaſing form, a firm, yet cautious mind,
Sincere, though prudent; conſtant, yet reſign'd;

Honour

Honour unchang'd, a principle profeſt,
Fix'd to one ſide, but moderate to the reſt:
An honeſt courtier, yet a patriot too,
Juſt to his prince, and to his country true.
Fill'd with the ſenſe of age, the fire of youth,
A ſcorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
A generous faith, from ſuperſtition free;
A love to peace, and hate of tyranny;
Such this man was; who now, from earth remov'd,
At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.

In this epitaph, as in many others, there appears, at the firſt view, a fault which I think ſcarcely any beauty can compenſate. The name is omitted. The end of an epitaph is to convey ſome account of the dead; and to what purpoſe is any thing told of him whoſe name is concealed? An epitaph, and a hiſtory, of a nameleſs hero, are equally abſurd, ſince the virtues and qualities ſo recounted in either, are ſcattered at the mercy of fortune to be appropriated by gueſs. The name, it is true, may be read upon the ſtone; but what obligation has it to the poet, whoſe verſes wander over the earth, and leave their ſubject behind them, and who is forced, like an unſkilful painter, to

to make his purpoſe known by adventitious help?

This epitaph is wholly without elevation, and contains nothing ſtriking or particular; but the poet is not to be blamed for the defects of his ſubject. He ſaid perhaps the beſt that could be ſaid. There are, however, ſome defects which were not made neceſſary by the character in which he was employed. There is no oppoſition between an *honeſt courtier* and a *patriot*; for an *honeſt courtier* cannot but be a *patriot*.

It was unſuitable to the nicety required in ſhort compoſitions, to cloſe his verſe with the word *too*; every rhyme ſhould be a word of emphaſis, nor can this rule be ſafely neglected, except where the length of the poem makes ſlight inaccuracies excuſable, or allows room for beauties ſufficient to overpower the effects of petty faults.

At the beginning of the ſeventh line the word *filled* is weak and proſaic, having no particular adaptation to any of the words that follow it.

The

The thought in the laſt line is impertinent, having no connection with the foregoing character, nor with the condition of the man deſcribed. Had the epitaph been written on the poor conſpirator * who died lately in priſon, after a confinement of more than forty years, without any crime proved againſt him, the ſentiment had been juſt and pathetical; but why ſhould Trumbal be congratulated upon his liberty, who had never known reſtraint?

III.

On the Hon. SIMON HARCOURT, *only Son of the Lord Chancellor* HARCOURT, *at the Church of Stanton-Harcourt in Oxfordſhire*, 1720.

To this ſad ſhrine, whoe'er thou art, draw near,
Here lies the friend moſt lov'd, the ſon moſt dear:
Who ne'er knew joy, but friendſhip might divide,
Or gave his father grief but when he dy'd.

How vain is reaſon, eloquence how weak!
If Pope muſt tell what Harcourt cannot ſpeak.
Oh, let thy once-lov'd friend inſcribe thy ſtone,
And with a father's ſorrows mix his own!

* Bernardi.

This

This epitaph is principally remarkable for the artful introduction of the name, which is inſerted with a peculiar felicity, to which chance muſt concur with genius, which no man can hope to attain twice, and which cannot be copied but with ſervile imitation.

I cannot but wiſh that, of this inſcription, the two laſt lines had been omitted, as they take away from the energy what they do not add to the ſenſe.

IV.

On JAMES CRAGGS, *Eſq*; *in Weſtminſter-Abbey.*

JACOBVS CRAGGS,
REGI MAGNAE BRITANNIAE A SECRETIS
ET CONSILIIS SANCTIORIBVS,
PRINCIPIS PARITER AC POPULI AMOR ET
DELICIAE:
VIXIT TITVLIS ET INVIDIA MAJOR,
ANNOS HEV PAVCOS, XXXV.
OB. FEB. XVI. MDCCXX.

Stateſman, yet friend to truth! of ſoul ſincere,
In action faithful, and in honour clear!

Who

Who broke no promiſe, ſerv'd no private end,
Who gain'd no title, and who loſt no friend;
Ennobled by himſelf, by all approv'd,
Prais'd, wept, and honour'd, by the Muſe he lov'd.

The lines on Craggs were not originally intended for an epitaph; and therefore ſome faults are to be imputed to the violence with which they are torn from the poem that firſt contained them. We may, however, obſerve ſome defects. There is a redundancy of words in the firſt couplet: it is ſuperfluous to tell of him, who was *ſincere*, *true*, and *faithful*, that he was *in honour clear*.

There ſeems to be an oppoſition intended in the fourth line, which is not very obvious: where is the wonder, that he who *gained no title*, ſhould *loſe no friend?*

It may be proper here to remark the abſurdity of joining, in the ſame inſcription, Latin and Engliſh, or verſe and proſe. If either language be preferable to the other, let that only be uſed; for no reaſon can be given why part of the information ſhould be given in one tongue, and part in another, on a tomb,

tomb, more than in any other place, on any other occaſion; and to tell all that can be conveniently told in verſe, and then to call in the help of proſe, has always the appearance of a very artleſs expedient, or of an attempt unaccompliſhed. Such an epitaph reſembles the converſation of a foreigner, who tells part of his meaning by words, and conveys part by ſigns.

V.

Intended for Mr. ROWE.
In Weſtminſter-Abbey.

Thy reliques, Rowe, to this fair urn we truſt,
And ſacred, place by Dryden's awful duſt:
Beneath a rude and nameleſs ſtone he lies,
To which thy tomb ſhall guide inquiring eyes.
Peace to thy gentle ſhade, and endleſs reſt!
Bleſt in thy genius, in thy love too bleſt!
One grateful woman to thy fame ſupplies
What a whole thankleſs land to his denies.

Of this inſcription the chief fault is, that it belongs leſs to Rowe, for whom it was written, than to Dryden, who was buried near him; and indeed gives very little information concerning either.

To wiſh, *Peace to thy ſhade*, is too mythological to be admitted into a chriſtian temple: the ancient worſhip has infected almoſt all our other compoſitions, and might therefore be contented to ſpare our epitaphs. Let fiction, at leaſt, ceaſe with life, and let us be ſerious over the grave.

VI.

On Mrs. CORBET, *who died of a Cancer in her Breaſt.*

Here reſts a woman, good without pretence,
Bleſt with plain reaſon, and with ſober ſenſe:
No conqueſts ſhe, but o'er herſelf deſir'd;
No arts eſſay'd, but not to be admir'd.
Paſſion and pride were to her ſoul unknown,
Convinc'd that Virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, ſo compos'd a mind,
So firm, yet ſoft, ſo ſtrong, yet ſo refin'd,
Heaven, as its pureſt gold, by tortures try'd,
The ſaint ſuſtained, but the woman dy'd.

I have always conſidered this as the moſt valuable of all Pope's epitaphs; the ſubject of it is a character not diſcriminated by any ſhining or eminent peculiarities; yet that

which really makes, though not the ſplendor, the felicity of life, and that which every wiſe man will chooſe for his final and laſting companion in the languor of age, in the quiet of privacy, when he departs weary and diſguſted from the oſtentatious, the volatile, and the vain. Of ſuch a character, which the dull overlook, and the gay deſpiſe, it was fit that the value ſhould be made known, and the dignity eſtabliſhed. Domeſtic virtue, as it is exerted without great occaſions, or conſpicuous conſequences, in an even unnoted tenor, required the genius of Pope to diſplay it in ſuch a manner as might attract regard, and enforce reverence.' Who can forbear to lament that this amiable woman has no name in the verſes?

If the particular lines of this inſcription be examined, it will appear leſs faulty than the reſt. There is ſcarce one line taken from common places, unleſs it be that in which *only Virtue* is ſaid to be *our own*. I once heard a Lady of great beauty and elegance object to the fourth line, that it contained an unnatural and incredible panegyrick. Of this let the Ladies judge.

VII.

On the Monument of the Hon. ROBERT DIGBY, *and of his Siſter* MARY, *erected by their Father the Lord* DIGBY, *in the Church of Sherborne in Dorſetſhire*, 1727.

Go! fair example of untainted youth,
Of modeſt wiſdom, and pacifick truth:
Compos'd in ſufferings, and in joy ſedate,
Good without noiſe, without pretenſion great.
Juſt of thy word, in every thought ſincere,
Who knew no wiſh but what the world might hear:
Of ſofteſt manners, unaffected mind,
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind:
Go, live! for Heaven's eternal year is thine,
Go, and exalt thy moral to divine.

And thou, bleſt maid! attendant on his doom,
Penſive haſt follow'd to the ſilent tomb,
Steer'd the ſame courſe to the ſame quiet ſhore,
Not parted long, and now to part no more!
Go, then, where only bliſs ſincere is known!
Go, where to love and to enjoy are one!

Yet take theſe tears, Mortality's relief,
And till we ſhare your joys, forgive our grief:
Theſe little rites, a ſtone, a verſe receive,
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give!

This

This epitaph contains of the brother only a general indiſcriminate character, and of the ſiſter tells nothing but that ſhe died. The difficulty in writing epitaphs is to give a particular and appropriate praiſe. This, however, is not always to be performed, whatever be the diligence or ability of the writer; for the greater part of mankind *have no character at all*, have little that diſtinguiſhes them from others equally good or bad, and therefore nothing can be ſaid of them which may not be applied with equal propriety to a thouſand more. It is indeed no great panegyrick, that there is incloſed in this tomb one who was born in one year, and died in another; yet many uſeful and amiable lives have been ſpent, which yet leave little materials, for any other memorial. Theſe are however not the proper ſubjects of poetry; and whenever friendſhip, or any other motive, obliges a poet to write on ſuch ſubjects, he muſt be forgiven if he ſometimes wanders in generalities, and utters the ſame praiſes over different tombs.

The ſcantineſs of human praiſes can ſcarcely be made more apparent, than by remarking

how often Pope has, in the few epitaphs which he compoſed, found it neceſſary to borrow from himſelf. The fourteen epitaphs, which he has written, compriſe about an hundred and forty lines, in which there are more repetitions than will eaſily be found in all the reſt of his works. In the eight lines which make the character of Digby, there is ſcarce any thought, or word, which may not be found in the other epitaphs.

The ninth line, which is far the ſtrongeſt and moſt elegant, is borrowed. The concluſion is the ſame with that on Harcourt, but is here more elegant and better connected.

VIII.

On Sir GODFREY KNELLER. *In Weſtminſter-Abbey*, 1723.

Kneller, by heaven, and not a maſter taught,
Whoſe art was nature, and whoſe pictures thought;
Now for two ages, having ſnatch'd from fate
Whate'er was beauteous, or whate'er was great,
Lies crown'd with Princes honours, Poets lays,
Due to his merit, and brave thirſt of praiſe.

Living, great Nature fear'd he might outvie
Her works; and, dying, fears herſelf may die.

Of

Of this epitaph the firſt couplet is good, the ſecond not bad, the third is deformed with a broken metaphor, the word *crowned* not being applicable to the *honours* or the *lays*, and the fourth is not only borrowed, but of very harſh conſtruction.

IX.

On General HENRY WITHERS. *In Weſtminſter-Abbey*, 1729.

Here, Withers, reſt! thou braveſt, gentleſt mind,
Thy country's friend, but more of human kind,
O! born to arms! O! worth in youth approv'd!
O! ſoft humanity in age belov'd!
For thee the hardy veteran drops a tear
And the gay courtier feels the ſigh ſincere.

Withers, adieu! yet not with thee remove
Thy martial ſpirit, or thy ſocial love!
Amidſt corruption, luxury, and rage,
Still leave ſome ancient virtues to our age:
Nor let us ſay (thoſe Engliſh glories gone)
The laſt true Briton lies beneath this ſtone.

The epitaph on Withers affords another inſtance of common places, though ſomewhat diverſified, by mingled qualities, and the peculiarity of a profeſſion.

The ſecond couplet is abrupt, general, and unpleaſing; exclamation ſeldom ſucceeds in our language; and, I think, it may be obſerved that the particle O! uſed at the beginning of a ſentence, always offends.

The third couplet is more happy; the value expreſſed for him, by different ſorts of men, raiſes him to eſteem; there is yet ſomething of the common cant of ſuperficial ſatiriſts, who ſuppoſe that the inſincerity of a courtier deſtroys all his ſenſations, and that he is equally a diſſembler to the living and the dead.

At the third couplet I ſhould wiſh the epitaph to cloſe, but that I ſhould be unwilling to loſe the two next lines, which yet are dearly bought if they cannot be retained without the four that follow them.

X.

On Mr. ELIJAH FENTON. *At Eaſthamſted in Berkſhire,* 1730.

This modeſt ſtone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly ſay, Here lies an honeſt man:
A poet, bleſt beyond the poet's fate,
Whom Heaven kept ſacred from the Proud and Great:
Foe to loud praiſe, and friend to learned eaſe,
Content with ſcience in the vale of peace.
Calmly he look'd on either life; and here
Saw nothing to regret, or there to fear;
From Nature's temperate feaſt roſe ſatisfy'd,
Thank'd heaven that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd.

The firſt couplet of this epitaph is borrowed. The four next lines contain a ſpecies of praiſe peculiar, original, and juſt. Here, therefore, the inſcription ſhould have ended, the latter part containing nothing but what is common to every man who is wiſe and good. The character of Fenton was ſo amiable, that I cannot forbear to wiſh for ſome poet or biographer to diſplay it more fully for the advantage of poſterity. If he did not ſtand in the firſt rank of genius, he may claim a place in the ſecond; and, whatever criticiſm may

may object to his writings, cenſure could find very little to blame in his life.

XI.

On Mr. GAY.

In Weſtminſter-Abbey, 1732.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; ſimplicity, a child:
With native humour tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and laſh the age:
Above temptation, in a low eſtate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the Great:
A ſafe companion, and an eaſy friend,
Unblam'd through life, lamented in thy end.
Theſe are thy honours! not that here thy buſt
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy duſt;
But that the Worthy and the Good ſhall ſay,
Striking their penſive boſoms—Here lies GAY.

As Gay was the favourite of our author, this epitaph was probably written with an uncommon degree of attention; yet it is not more happily executed than the reſt, for it does not always happen that the ſucceſs of a poet is proportionate to his labour. The ſame obſervation may be extended to all works of imagination, which are often influenced by cauſes wholly out of the performer's

power, by hints of which he perceives not the origin, by ſudden elevations of mind which he cannot produce in himſelf, and which ſometimes riſe when he expects them leaſt.

The two parts of the firſt line are only echoes of each other; *gentle manners* and *mild affections*, if they mean any thing, muſt mean the ſame.

That Gay was a *man in wit* is a very frigid commendation; to have the wit of a man is not much for a poet. The *wit of man*, and the *ſimplicity of a child*, make a poor and vulgar contraſt, and raiſe no ideas of excellence, either intellectual or moral.

In the next couplet *rage* is leſs properly introduced after the mention of *mildneſs* and *gentleneſs*, which are made the conſtituents of his character; for a man ſo *mild* and *gentle* to *temper* his *rage*, was not difficult.

The next line is unharmonious in its ſound, and mean in its conception; the oppoſition is obvious, and the word *laſh* uſed abſolutely, and

and without any modification, is groſs and improper.

To be *above temptation* in poverty, and *free from corruption among the Great*, is indeed ſuch a peculiarity as deſerved notice. But to be a *ſafe companion* is praiſe merely negative, ariſing not from the poſſeſſion of virtue, but the abſence of vice, and that one of the moſt odious.

As little can be added to his character, by aſſerting that he was *lamented in his end*. Every man that dies is, at leaſt by the writer of his epitaph, ſuppoſed to be lamented, and therefore this general lamentation does no honour to Gay.

The eight firſt lines have no grammar; the adjectives are without any ſubſtantive, and the epithets without a ſubject.

The thought in the laſt line, that Gay is buried in the boſoms of the *worthy* and the *good*, who are diſtinguiſhed only to lengthen the line, is ſo dark that few underſtand it; and ſo harſh, when it is explained, that ſtill fewer approve.

XII.

XII.

Intended for Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
In Weſtminſter-Abbey.

ISAACUS NEWTONIUS:
Quem Immortalem
Teſtantur, *Tempus*, *Natura*, *Cœlum*:
Mortalem
Hoc marmor fatetur.

Nature, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night,
GOD ſaid, *Let Newton be!* And all was light.

Of this epitaph, ſhort as it is, the faults ſeem not to be very few. Why part ſhould be Latin and part Engliſh, it is not eaſy to diſcover. In the Latin, the oppoſition of *Immortalis* and *Mortalis*, is a mere ſound, or a mere quibble; he is not *immortal* in any ſenſe contrary to that in which he is *mortal*.

In the verſes the thought is obvious, and the words *night* and *light* are too nearly allied.

XIII.

XIII.

On EDMUND *Duke of* BUCKINGHAM, *who died in the 19th Year of his Age*, 1735.

If modeſt youth, with cool reflection crown'd,
And every opening virtue blooming round,
Could ſave a parent's juſteſt pride from fate,
Or add one patriot to a ſinking ſtate;
This weeping marble had not aſk'd thy tear,
Or ſadly told, how many hopes lie here!
The living virtue now had ſhone approv'd,
The ſenate heard him, and his country lov'd.
Yet ſofter honours, and leſs noiſy fame
Attend the ſhade of gentle Buckingham:
In whom a race, for courage fam'd and art,
Ends in the milder merit of the heart;
And chiefs or ſages long to Britain given,
Pays the laſt tribute of a ſaint to heaven.

This epitaph Mr. Warburton prefers to the reſt, but I know not for what reaſon. To *crown* with *reflection* is ſurely a mode of ſpeech approaching to nonſenſe. *Opening virtues blooming round*, is ſomething like tautology; the ſix following lines are poor and proſaick. *Art* is in another couplet uſed for *arts*, that a rhyme may be had to *heart*.

The

The ſix laſt lines are the beſt, but not excellent.

The reſt of his ſepulchral performances, hardly deſerve the notice of criticiſm. The contemptible *Dialogue* between HE and SHE ſhould have been ſuppreſſed for the author's ſake.

In his laſt epitaph on himſelf, in which he attempts to be jocular upon one of the few things that make wiſe men ſerious, he confounds the living man with the dead:

Under this ſtone, or under this ſill,
Or under this turf, &c.

When a man is once buried, the queſtion, under what he is buried, is eaſily decided. He forgot that though he wrote the epitaph in a ſtate of uncertainty, yet it could not be laid over him till his grave was made. Such is the folly of wit when it is ill employed.

The world has but little new; even this ſeems to have been borrowed from the following tuneleſs lines:

Ludovici

Ludovici Areoſti humantur oſſa
Sub hoc marmore, vel ſub hac humo, ſeu
Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres
Sive hærede benignior comes, ſeu
Opportunius incidens Viator;
Nam ſcire haud potuit futura, ſed nec
Tanti erat vacuum ſibi cadaver
Ut utnam cuperet parare vivens,
Vivens iſta tamen ſibi paravit.
Quæ inſcribi voluit ſuo ſepulchro
Olim ſiquod haberet ſepulchrum.

Surely even the writer of theſe lines did not venture to expect that he ſhould have ever had ſuch an illuſtrious imitator.

PITT.

PITT

P I T T.

CHRISTOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I ſhall relate, more than has been already publiſhed, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. Warton, was born in 1699 at Blandford, the ſon of a phyſician much eſteemed.

He was, in 1714, received as a ſcholar into Wincheſter College, where he was diſtinguiſhed by exerciſes of uncommon elegance; and, at his removal to New College in 1719, preſented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary ſtudies, a compleat verſion of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been tranſlated by Rowe.

This is an inſtance of early diligence which well deſerves to be recorded. The ſuppreſſion of ſuch a work, recommended by ſuch uncommon circumſtances, is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable, to load libraries with ſuperfluous books; but incitements to early excellence are never ſuperfluous, and from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had reſided at his College three years, he was preſented to the rectory of Pimpern in Dorſetſhire (1722), by his relation, Mr. Pitt of Stratfeildſea in Hampſhire; and, reſigning his fellowſhip, continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Maſter of Arts (1724).

He probably about this time tranſlated *Vida's Art of Poetry*, which Triſtram's elegant edition had then made popular. In this tranſlation he diſtinguiſhed himſelf, both by its general elegance, and by the ſkilful adaptation of his numbers, to the images expreſſed; a beauty which Vida has with great ardour enforced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living, a place very pleaſing by its ſituation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he paſſed the reſt of his life, reverenced for his virtue, and beloved for the ſoftneſs of his temper and the eaſineſs of his manners. Before ſtrangers he had ſomething of the ſcholar's timidity or diſtruſt; but when he became familiar he was in a very high degree chearful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general reſpect; and he paſſed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindneſs of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he compoſed his Miſcellany, publiſhed in 1727, it is not eaſy nor neceſſary to know: thoſe which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not obſerved that any riſe above mediocrity.

The ſucceſs of his *Vida* animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he publiſhed a verſion of the firſt book of the Eneid. This being, I ſuppoſe, com-

mended by his friends, he ſome time afterwards added three or four more; with an advertiſement, in which he repreſents himſelf as tranſlating with great indifference, and with a progreſs of which himſelf was hardly conſcious.

At laſt, without any further contention with his modeſty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete Engliſh Eneid, which I am ſorry to ſee excluded from the collection of his poems. It would have been pleaſing to have an opportunity of comparing the two beſt tranſlations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the ſame author.

Pitt engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally obſerved his failures, and avoided them; and, as he wrote after Pope's Iliad, he had an example of an exact, equable, and ſplendid verſification. With theſe advantages, ſeconded by great diligence, he might ſucceſsfully labour particular paſſages, and eſcape many errors. If the two verſions are compared, perhaps the reſult would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general

neral vigour and ſprightlineſs, and Pitt often ſtops him to contemplate the excellence of a ſingle couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and liſtleſs peruſal; that Pitt pleaſes the criticks, and Dryden the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deſervedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a ſtone at Blandford, on which is this inſcription:

In memory of
CHR. PITT, clerk, M.A.
Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more
for the univerſal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
ſimplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent,
and died beloved
Apr. 13, 1748.
aged 48.

THOMSON.

THOMSON.

JAMES THOMSON, the ſon of a miniſter well eſteemed for his piety and diligence, was born September 7, 1700, at Ednam, in the ſhire of Roxburgh, of which his father was paſtor. His mother, whoſe name was Hume, inherited as co-heireſs a portion of a ſmall eſtate. The revenue of a pariſh in Scotland is ſeldom large; and it was probably in commiſeration of the difficulty with which Mr. Thomſon ſupported his family, having nine children, that Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring miniſter, diſcovering in James uncommon promiſes of future excellence, undertook to ſuperintend his education, and provide him books.

He

He was taught the common rudiments of learning at the ſchool of Jedburg, a place which he delights to recollect in his poem of *Autumn*; but was not conſidered by his maſter as ſuperior to common boys, though in thoſe early days he amuſed his patron and his friends with poetical compoſitions; with which however he ſo little pleaſed himſelf, that on every new-year's day he threw into the fire all the productions of the foregoing year.

From the ſchool he was removed to Edinburgh, where he had not reſided two years when his father died, and left all his children to the care of their mother, who raiſed upon her little eſtate what money a mortgage could afford, and, removing with her family to Edinburgh, lived to ſee her ſon riſing into eminence.

The deſign of Thomſon's friends was to breed him a miniſter. He lived at Edinburgh, as at ſchool, without diſtinction or expectation, till, at the uſual time, he performed a probationary exerciſe by explaining

ing a pſalm. His diction was ſo poetically ſplendid, that Mr. Hamilton, the profeſſor of Divinity, reproved him for ſpeaking language unintelligible to a popular audience, and he cenſured one of his expreſſions as indecent, if not profane.

This rebuke is reported to have repreſſed his thoughts of an eccleſiaſtical character, and he probably cultivated with new diligence his bloſſoms of poetry, which however were in ſome danger of a blaſt; for, ſubmitting his productions to ſome who thought themſelves qualified to criticiſe, he heard of nothing but faults, but, finding other judges more favourable, he did not ſuffer himſelf to ſink into deſpondence.

He eaſily diſcovered that the only ſtage on which a poet could appear, with any hope of advantage, was London; a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might ſoon become conſpicuous, and would find friends as ſoon as it became reputable to befriend it. A lady, who was acquainted with his mother, adviſed him to the journey, and promiſed ſome

ſome countenance or aſſiſtance, which at laſt he never received; however, he juſtified his adventure by her encouragement, and came to ſeek in London patronage and fame.

At his arrival he found his way to Mr. Mallet, then tutor to the ſons of the duke of Montroſe. He had recommendations to ſeveral perſons of conſequence, which he had tied up carefully in his handkerchief; but as he paſſed along the ſtreet, with the gaping curioſity of a new-comer, his attention was upon every thing rather than his pocket, and his magazine of credentials was ſtolen from him.

His firſt want was of a pair of ſhoes. For the ſupply of all his neceſſities, his whole fund was his *Winter*, which for a time could find no purchaſer; till, at laſt, Mr. Millan was perſuaded to buy it at a low price; and this low price he had for ſome time reaſon to regret; but, by accident, Mr. Whatley, a man not wholly unknown among authors, happening to turn his eye upon it, was ſo delighted that he ran from place to place celebrating its excellence. Thomſon obtained likewiſe

likewiſe the notice of Aaron Hill; whom, being friendleſs and indigent, and glad of kindneſs, he courted with every expreſſion of ſervile adulation.

Winter was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton, but attracted no regard from him to the author; till Aaron Hill awakened his attention by ſome verſes addreſſed to Thomſon, and publiſhed in one of the newſpapers, which cenſured the great for their neglect of ingenious men. Thomſon then received a preſent of twenty guineas, of which he gives this account to Mr. Hill:

" I hinted to you in my laſt, that on Sa-
" turday morning I was with Sir Spencer
" Compton. A certain gentleman, without
" my deſire, ſpoke to him concerning me;
" his anſwer was, that I had never come near
" him. Then the gentleman put the queſtion,
" If he deſired that I ſhould wait on him?
" he returned, he did. On this, the gentle-
" man gave me an introductory Letter to
" him. He received me in what they com-
" monly call a civil manner; aſked me ſome
" common-place queſtions, and made me a
" preſent

" preſent of twenty guineas. I am very " ready to own that the preſent was larger " than my performance deſerved; and ſhall " aſcribe it to his generoſity, or any other " cauſe, rather than the merit of the addreſs."

The poem, which, being of a new kind, few would venture at firſt to like, by degrees gained upon the publick; and one edition was very ſpeedily ſucceeded by another.

Thomſon's credit was now high, and every day brought him new friends; among others Dr. Rundle, a man afterwards unfortunately famous, ſought his acquaintance, and found his qualities ſuch, that he recommended him to the lord chancellor Talbot.

Winter was accompanied, in many editions, not only with a preface and a dedication, but with poetical praiſes by Mr. Hill, Mr. Mallet (then *Malloch*), and *Mira*, the fictitious name of a lady once too well known. Why the dedications are, to *Winter* and the other ſeaſons, contrarily to cuſtom, left out in the collected works, the reader may enquire.

The

The next year (1727) he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by three publications; of *Summer*, in purſuance of his plan; of *a Poem on the Death of Sir Iſaac Newton*, which he was enabled to perform as an exact philoſopher by the inſtruction of Mr. Gray; and of *Britannia*, a kind of poetical invective againſt the miniſtry, whom the nation then thought not forward enough in reſenting the depredations of the Spaniards. By this piece he declared himſelf an adherent to the oppoſition, and had therefore no favour to expect from the Court.

Thomſon, having been ſome time entertained in the family of the lord Binning, was deſirous of teſtifying his gratitude by making him the patron of his *Summer*; but the ſame kindneſs which had firſt diſpoſed lord Binning to encourage him, determined him to refuſe the dedication, which was by his advice addreſſed to Mr. Doddington; a man who had more power to advance the reputation and fortune of a poet.

Spring was publiſhed next year, with a dedication to the counteſs of Hertford; whoſe

practice it was to invite every Summer ſome poet into the country, to hear her verſes, and aſſiſt her ſtudies. This honour was one Summer conferred on Thomſon, who took more delight in carouſing with lord Hertford and his friends than aſſiſting her ladyſhip's poetical operations, and therefore never received another ſummons.

Autumn, the ſeaſon to which the *Spring* and *Summer* are preparatory, ſtill remained unſung, and was delayed till he publiſhed (1730) his works collected.

He produced in 1727 the tragedy of *Sophoniſba*, which raiſed ſuch expectation, that every rehearſal was dignified with a ſplendid audience, collected to anticipate the delight that was preparing for the publick. It was obſerved however that nobody was much affected, and that the company roſe as from a moral lecture.

It had upon the ſtage no unuſual degree of ſucceſs. Slight accidents will operate upon the taſte of pleaſure. There was a feeble line in the play;

O Sophoniſba, Sophoniſba, O!

This gave occaſion to a waggiſh parody;

O, Jemmy Thomſon, Jemmy Thomſon, O!

which for a while was echoed through the town.

I have been told by Savage, that of the Prologue to *Sophoniſba* the firſt part was written by Pope, who could not be perſuaded to finiſh it, and that the concluding lines were added by Mallet.

Thomſon was not long afterwards, by the influence of Dr. Rundle, ſent to travel with Mr. Charles Talbot, the eldeſt ſon of the Chancellor. He was yet young enough to receive new impreſſions, to have his opinions rectified, and his views enlarged; nor can he be ſuppoſed to have wanted that curioſity which is inſeparable from an active and comprehenſive mind. He may therefore now be ſuppoſed to have revelled in all the joys of intellectual luxury; he was every day feaſted with inſtructive novelties; he lived ſplendidly

without expence, and might expect when he returned home a certain eſtabliſhment.

At this time a long courſe of oppoſition to Sir Robert Walpole had filled the nation with clamours for liberty, of which no man felt the want, and with care for liberty, which was not in danger. Thomſon, in his travels on the continent, found or fancied ſo many evils ariſing from the tyranny of other governments, that he reſolved to write a very long poem, in five parts, upon Liberty.

While he was buſy on the firſt book, Mr. Talbot died; and Thomſon, who had been rewarded for his attendance by the place of ſecretary of the Briefs, pays in the initial lines a decent tribute to his memory.

Upon this great poem two years were ſpent, and the author congratulated himſelf upon it as his nobleſt work; but an author and his reader are not always of a mind. *Liberty* called in vain upon her votaries to read her praiſes and reward her encomiaſt: her praiſes were condemned to harbour ſpiders, and to gather duſt; none of Thomſon's performances were ſo little regarded.

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The judgement of the publick was not erroneous; the recurrence of the ſame images muſt tire in time; an enumeration of examples to prove a poſition which nobody denied, as it was from the beginning ſuperfluous, muſt quickly grow diſguſting.

The poem of *Liberty* does not now appear in its original ſtate; but when the author's works were collected, after his death, was ſhortened by Sir George Lyttelton, with a liberty which, as it has a manifeſt tendency to leſſen the confidence of ſociety, and to confound the characters of authors, by making one man write by the judgement of another, cannot be juſtified by any ſuppoſed propriety of the alteration, or kindneſs of the friend.—I wiſh to ſee it exhibited as its author left it.

Thomſon now lived in eaſe and plenty, and ſeems for a while to have ſuſpended his poetry; but he was ſoon called back to labour by the death of the Chancellor, for his place then became vacant; and though the lord Hardwicke delayed for ſome time to give it away, Thomſon's baſhfulneſs, or pride, or

ſome other motive perhaps not more laudable, withheld him from ſoliciting; and the new Chancellor would not give him what he would not aſk.

He now relapſed to his former indigence; but the prince of Wales was at that time ſtruggling for popularity, and by the influence of Mr. Lyttelton profeſſed himſelf the patron of wit: to him Thomſon was introduced, and being gaily interrogated about the ſtate of his affairs, ſaid, *that they were in a more poetical poſture than formerly*; and had a penſion allowed him of one hundred pounds a year.

Being now obliged to write, he produced (1738) the tragedy of *Agamemnon*, which was much ſhortened in the repreſentation. It had the fate which moſt commonly attends mythological ſtories, and was only endured, but not favoured. It ſtruggled with ſuch difficulty through the firſt night, that Thomſon, coming late to his friends with whom he was to ſup, excuſed his delay by telling them how the ſweat of his diſtreſs had ſo diſordered his wig, that he could not come till he had been refitted by a barber.

He

He ſo intereſted himſelf in his own drama, that, if I remember right, as he ſat in the upper gallery he accompanied the players by audible recitation, till a friendly hint frighted him to ſilence. Pope countenanced *Agamemnon*, by coming to it the firſt night.

About this time the Act was paſſed for licenſing plays, of which the firſt operation was the prohibition of *Guſtavus Vaſa*, a tragedy of Mr. Brooke, whom the publick recompenſed by a very liberal ſubſcription; the next was the refuſal of *Edward and Eleonora*, offered by Thomſon. It is hard to diſcover why either play ſhould have been obſtructed. Thomſon likewiſe endeavoured to repair his loſs by a ſubſcription, of which I cannot now tell the ſucceſs.

When the publick murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomſon, one of the miniſterial writers remarked, that *he had taken a* Liberty *which was not agreeable to* Britannia *in any* Seaſon.

He was ſoon after employed, in conjunction with Mr. Mallet, to write the maſque

of *Alfred*, which was acted before the Prince at Cliefden-houſe.

His next work (1745) was *Tancred and Sigiſmunda*, the moſt ſucceſsful of all his tragedies; for it ſtill keeps its turn upon the ſtage. He ſeems not to be, either by the bent of nature or habits of ſtudy, much qualified for tragedy. It does not appear that he had much ſenſe of the pathetick, and his diffuſive and deſcriptive ſtyle produced declamation rather than dialogue.

His friend Mr. Lyttelton was now in power, and conferred upon him the office of ſurveyor-general of the Leeward Iſlands; from which, when his deputy was paid, he received about three hundred pounds a year.

The laſt piece that he lived to publiſh was the *Caſtle of Indolence*, which was many years under his hand, but was at laſt finiſhed with great accuracy. The firſt canto opens a ſcene of lazy luxury, that fills the imagination.

He was now at eaſe, but was not long to enjoy it; for, by taking cold on the water between

between London and Kew, he caught a diſorder, which, with ſome careleſs exaſperation, ended in a fever that put an end to his life, Auguſt 27, 1748. He was buried in the church of Richmond, without an inſcription; but a monument has been erected to his memory in Weſtminſter-abbey.

Thomſon was of ſtature above the middle ſize, and *more fat than bard beſeems*, of a dull countenance, and a groſs, unanimated, uninviting appearance; ſilent in mingled company, but chearful among ſelect friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved.

He left behind him the tragedy of *Coriolanus*, which was, by the zeal of his patron Sir George Lyttelton, brought upon the ſtage for the benefit of his family, and recommended by a Prologue, which Quin, who had long lived with Thomſon in fond intimacy, ſpoke in ſuch a manner as ſhewed him *to be*, on that occaſion, *no actor*. The commencement of this benevolence is very honourable to Quin; who is reported to have delivered Thomſon, then known to him only for

for his genius, from an arreſt, by a very conſiderable preſent; and its continuance is honourable to both; for friendſhip is not always the ſequel of obligation. By this tragedy a conſiderable ſum was raiſed, of which part diſcharged his debts, and the reſt was remitted to his ſiſters, whom, however removed from them by place or condition, he regarded with great tenderneſs, as will appear by the following Letter, which I communicate with much pleaſure, as it gives me at once an opportunity of recording the fraternal kindneſs of Thomſon, and reflecting on the friendly aſſiſtance of Mr. Boſwell, from whom I received it.

" Hagley in Worceſterſhire,
" October the 4th, 1747.

" My dear Siſter,

" I thought you had known me better " than to interpret my ſilence into a decay " of affection, eſpecially as your behaviour " has always been ſuch as rather to increaſe " than diminiſh it. Don't imagine, becauſe " I am a bad correſpondent, that I can ever " prove an unkind friend and brother. I " muſt

" muſt do myſelf the juſtice to tell you, that
" my affections are naturally very fixed and
" conſtant; and if I had ever reaſon of com-
" plaint againſt you (of which by the bye I
" have not the leaſt ſhadow), I am con-
" ſcious of ſo many defects in myſelf, as diſ-
" poſe me to be not a little charitable and
" forgiving."

" It gives me the trueſt heart-felt ſatiſ-
" faction to hear you have a good kind huſ-
" band, and are in eaſy contented circum-
" ſtances; but were they otherwiſe, that
" would only awaken and heighten my ten-
" derneſs towards you. As our good and
" tender-hearted parents did not live to re-
" ceive any material teſtimonies of that
" higheſt human gratitude I owed them (than
" which nothing could have given me equal
" pleaſure), the only return I can make
" them now is by kindneſs to thoſe they
" left behind them: would to God poor
" Lizy had lived longer, to have been a
" farther witneſs of the truth of what I ſay,
" and that I might have had the pleaſure of
" ſeeing once more a ſiſter, who ſo truly de-
" ſerved

" ſerved my eſteem and love. But ſhe is
" happy, while we muſt toil a little longer
" here below: let us however do it chear-
" fully and gratefully, ſupported by the
" pleaſing hope of meeting yet again on a
" ſafer ſhore, where to recollect the ſtorms
" and difficulties of life will not perhaps be
" inconſiſtent with that bliſsful ſtate. You
" did right to call your daughter by her
" name; for you muſt needs have had a par-
" ticular tender friendſhip for one another,
" endeared as you were by nature, by hav-
" ing paſſed the affectionate years of your
" youth together; and by that great ſoftner
" and engager of hearts, mutual hardſhip.
" That it was in my power to eaſe it a
" little, I account one of the moſt exquiſite
" pleaſures of my life.—But enough of this
" melancholy though not unpleaſing ſtrain.

" I eſteem you for your ſenſible and diſin-
" tereſted advice to Mr. Bell, as you will ſee
" by my Letter to him: as I approve entire-
" ly of his marrying again, you may readily
" aſk me why I don't marry at all. My cir-
" cumſtances have hitherto been ſo variable

" and

" and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as
" induce to keep me from engaging in ſuch a
" ſtate: and now, though they are more
" ſettled, and of late (which you will be
" glad to hear) conſiderably improved, I
" begin to think myſelf too far advanced in
" life for ſuch youthful undertakings, not to
" mention ſome other petty reaſons that are
" apt to ſtartle the delicacy of difficult old
" batchelors. I am, however, not a little
" ſuſpicious that was I to pay a viſit to Scot-
" land (which I have ſome thoughts of
" doing ſoon) I might poſſibly be tempted
" to think of a thing not eaſily repaired if
" done amiſs. I have always been of opi-
" nion that none make better wives than
" the ladies of Scotland; and yet, who more
" forſaken than they, while the gentlemen
" are continually running abroad all the
" world over? Some of them, it is true, are
" wiſe enough to return for a wife. You
" ſee I am beginning to make intereſt already
" with the Scots ladies.—But no more of
" this infectious ſubject.—Pray let me hear
" from you now and then; and though I
" am not a regular correſpondent, yet per-
" haps I may mend in that reſpect. Re-

" member

" member me kindly to your huſband, and " believe me to be,

" Your moſt affectionate brother,

" JAMES THOMSON."

(Addreſſed) " To Mrs. Thomſon in Lanark."

The benevolence of Thomſon was fervid, but not active; he would give, on all occaſions, what aſſiſtance his purſe would ſupply; but the offices of intervention or ſolicitation he could not conquer his ſluggiſhneſs ſufficiently to perform. The affairs of others, however, were not more neglected than his own. He had often felt the inconveniences of idleneſs, but he never cured it; and was ſo conſcious of his own character, that he talked of writing an Eaſtern Tale of *the Man who loved to be in Diſtreſs.*

Among his peculiarities was a very unſkilful and inarticulate manner of pronouncing any lofty or ſolemn compoſition. He was once reading to Doddington, who, being himſelf a reader eminently elegant, was ſo much provoked by his odd utterance, that he ſnatched the paper from his hand,

and told him that he did not underſtand his own verſes.

The biographer of Thomſon has remarked, that an author's life is beſt read in his works: his obſervation was not well-timed. Savage, who lived much with Thomſon, once told me, how he heard a lady remarking that ſhe could gather from his works three parts of his character, that he was a *great Lover*, *a great Swimmer*, and *rigorouſly abſtinent*; but, ſaid Savage, he knows not any love but that of the ſex; he was perhaps never in cold water in his life; and he indulges himſelf in all the luxury that comes within his reach. Yet Savage always ſpoke with the moſt eager praiſe of his ſocial qualities, his warmth and conſtancy of friendſhip, and his adherence to his firſt acquaintance when the advancement of his reputation had left them behind him.

As a writer, he is entitled to one praiſe of the higheſt kind; his mode of thinking, and of expreſſing his thoughts, is original. His blank verſe is no more the blank verſe of Milton, or of any other poet, than the rhymes of Prior are the rhymes of Cowley. His numbers,

numbers, his pauſes, his diction, are of his own growth, without tranſcription, without imitation. He thinks in a peculiar train, and he thinks always as a man of genius; he looks round on Nature and on Life, with the eye which Nature beſtows only on a poet; the eye that diſtinguiſhes, in every thing preſented to its view, whatever there is on which imagination can delight to be detained, and with a mind that at once comprehends the vaſt, and attends to the minute. The reader of the *Seaſons* wonders that he never ſaw before what Thomſon ſhews him, and that he never yet has felt what Thomſon impreſſes.

His is one of the works in which blank verſe ſeems properly uſed; Thomſon's wide expanſion of general views, and his enumeration of circumſtantial varieties, would have been obſtructed and embarraſſed by the frequent interſection of the ſenſe, which are the neceſſary effects of rhyme.

His deſcriptions of extended ſcenes and general effects bring before us the whole magnificence of Nature, whether pleaſing or dreadful. The gaiety of *Spring*, the ſplen-

dour of *Summer*, the tranquillity of *Autumn*, and the horror of *Winter*, take in their turns poſſeſſion of the mind. The poet leads us through the appearances of things as they are ſucceſſively varied by the viciſſitudes of the year, and imparts to us ſo much of his own enthuſiaſm, that our thoughts expand with his imagery, and kindle with his ſentiments. Nor is the naturaliſt without his part in the entertainment; for he is aſſiſted to recollect and to combine, to arrange his diſcoveries, and to amplify the ſphere of his contemplation.

The great defect of the *Seaſons* is want of method; but for this I know not that there was any remedy. Of many appearances ſubſiſting all at once, no rule can be given why one ſhould be mentioned before another; yet the memory wants the help of order, and the curioſity is not excited by ſuſpenſe or expectation.

His diction is in the higheſt degree florid and luxuriant, ſuch as may be ſaid to be to his images and thoughts *both their luſtre and their ſhade*; ſuch as inveſts them with ſplen-

dour, through which perhaps they are not always eaſily diſcerned. It is too exuberant, and ſometimes may be charged with filling the ear more than the mind.

Theſe Poems, with which I was acquainted at their firſt appearance, I have ſince found altered and enlarged by ſubſequent reviſals, as the author ſuppoſed his judgement to grow more exact, and as books or converſation extended his knowledge and opened his proſpects. They are, I think, improved in general; yet I know not whether they have not loſt part of what Temple calls their *race*; a word which, applied to wines, in its primitive ſenſe, means the flavour of the ſoil.

Liberty, when it firſt appeared, I tried to read, and ſoon deſiſted. I have never tried again, and therefore will not hazard either praiſe or cenſure.

WATTS.

WATTS.

THE Poems of Dr. WATTS were by my recommendation inſerted in the late Collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleaſure or wearineſs they may find in the peruſal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the ſame name, kept a boarding-ſchool for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a ſhoemaker. He appears, from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Iſaac, the eldeſt of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I ſuppoſe, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorne, a clergyman, maſter of the Free-ſchool at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his ſcholar afterwards inſcribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at ſchool was ſo conſpicuous, that a ſubſcription was propoſed for his ſupport at the Univerſity; but he declared his reſolution to take his lot with the Diſſenters. Such he was as every Chriſtian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

He therefore repaired in 1690 to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-ſtudents Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Horte, afterwards Archbiſhop of Tuam. Some Latin Eſſays, ſuppoſed to have been written as exerciſes at this academy, ſhew a degree of knowledge, both philoſophical and theological, ſuch as very few attain by a much longer courſe of ſtudy.

He

He was, as he hints in his Miſcellanies, a maker of verſes from fifteen to fifty, and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verſes to his brother, in the *glyconick* meaſure, written when he was ſeventeen, are remarkably eaſy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with ſuch neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has ſuch copiouſneſs and ſplendour, as ſhews that he was but at a very little diſtance from excellence.

His method of ſtudy was to impreſs the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one ſyſtem with ſupplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, Independents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and ſpent two years in ſtudy and devotion

at the houſe of his father, who treated him with great tenderneſs; and had the happineſs, indulged to few parents, of living to ſee his ſon eminent for literature and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartopp five years, as domeſtick tutor to his ſon; and in that time particularly devoted himſelf to the ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures; and being choſen aſſiſtant to Dr. Chauncey, preached the firſt time on the birth-day that compleated his twenty-fourth year; probably conſidering that as the day of a ſecond nativity, by which he entered on a new period of exiſtence.

In about three years he ſucceeded Dr. Chauncey; but, ſoon after his entrance on his charge, he was ſeized by a dangerous illneſs, which ſunk him to ſuch weakneſs, that the congregation thought an aſſiſtant neceſſary, and appointed Mr. Price. His health then returned gradually, and he performed his duty, till (1712) he was ſeized by a fever of ſuch violence and continuance, that, from the feebleneſs which it brought upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

This

This calamitous ſtate made the compaſſion of his friends neceſſary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Thomas Abney, who received him into his houſe; where, with a conſtancy of friendſhip and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-ſix years with all the kindneſs that friendſhip could prompt, and all the attention that reſpect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a ſtate in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deſerves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons's repreſentation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewiſe to multitudes beſides.

" Our next obſervation ſhall be made upon " that remarkably kind Providence which " brought the Doctor into Sir Thomas Ab-

" ney's

" ney's family, and continued him there till " his death, a period of no leſs than thirty- " ſix years. In the midſt of his ſacred labours " for the glory of God, and good of his ge- " neration, he is ſeized with a moſt violent " and threatening fever, which leaves him " oppreſſed with great weakneſs, and puts a " ſtop at leaſt to his publick ſervices for four " years. In this diſtreſſing ſeaſon, doubly ſo " to his active and pious ſpirit, he is invited " to Sir Thomas Abney's family, nor ever " removes from it till he had finiſhed his days. " Here he enjoyed the uninterrupted demon- " ſtrations of the trueſt friendſhip. Here, " without any care of his own, he had every " thing which could contribute to the enjoy- " ment of life, and favour the unwearied " purſuits of his ſtudies. Here he dwelt in " a family, which, for piety, order, harmony, " and every virtue, was an houſe of God. " Here he had the privilege of a country re- " ceſs, the fragrant bower, the ſpreading " lawn, the flowery garden, and other ad- " vantages, to ſooth his mind and aid his " reſtoration to health; to yield him, when- " ever he choſe them, moſt grateful intervals " from his laborious ſtudies, and enable him

" to

" to return to them with redoubled vigour
" and delight. Had it not been for this moſt
" happy event, he might, as to outward view,
" have feebly, it may be painfully, dragged
" on through many more years of languor,
" and inability for publick ſervice, and even
" for profitable ſtudy, or perhaps might have
" ſunk into his grave under the overwhelming
" load of infirmities in the midſt of his days;
" and thus the church and world would have
" been deprived of thoſe many excellent ſer-
" mons and works, which he drew up and
" publiſhed during his long reſidence in this
" family. In a few years after his coming
" hither, Sir Thomas Abney dies; but his
" amiable conſort ſurvives, who ſhews the
" Doctor the ſame reſpect and friendſhip as
" before, and moſt happily for him and great
" numbers beſides; for, as her riches were
" great, her generoſity and munificence were
" in full proportion; her thread of life was
" drawn out to a great age, even beyond that
" of the Doctor's; and thus this excellent
" man, through her kindneſs, and that of
" her daughter the preſent Mrs. Elizabeth
" Abney, who in a like degree eſteemed and
" honoured him, enjoyed all the benefits and

" felicities he experienced at his firſt entrance " into this family, till his days were num- " bered and finiſhed, and, like a ſhock of " corn in its ſeaſon, he aſcended into the re- " gions of perfect and immortal life and " joy."

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be conſidered that it compriſes an account of ſix-and-thirty years, and thoſe the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwiſe diverſified than by ſucceſſive publications. The ſeries of his works I am not able to deduce; their number, and their variety, ſhew the intenſeneſs of his induſtry, and the extent of his capacity.

He was one of the firſt authors that taught the Diſſenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteneſs, was commonly obſcured and blunted by coarſeneſs and inelegance of ſtyle. He ſhewed them, that zeal and purity might be expreſſed and enforced by poliſhed diction.

He

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation, and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low ſtature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his diſcourſes very efficacious. I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foſter had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr. Hawkeſworth, who told me, that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and ſuch his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompoſe his curſory ſermons; but having adjuſted the heads, and ſketched out ſome particulars, truſted for ſucceſs to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to aſſiſt his eloquence by any geſticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correſpondence with theological truth, he did not ſee how they could enforce it.

At the concluſion of weighty ſentences he gave time, by a ſhort pauſe, for the proper impreſſion.

To ſtated and publick inſtruction he added familiar viſits and perſonal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which converſation offered of diffuſing and increaſing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of reſentment; but, by his eſtabliſhed and habitual practice, he was gentle, modeſt, and inoffenſive. His tenderneſs appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue; and for children, he condeſcended to lay aſide the ſcholar, the philoſopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and ſyſtems of inſtruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reaſon through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer who

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is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechiſm for children in their fourth year. A voluntary deſcent from the dignity of ſcience is perhaps the hardeſt leſſon that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curioſity excurſive, and his induſtry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his ſubjects various. With his theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire the meekneſs of his oppoſition, and the mildneſs of his cenſures. It was not only in his book but in his mind that *orthodoxy* was *united* with *charity*.

Of his philoſophical pieces, his Logick has been received into the univerſities, and therefore wants no private recommendation: if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it muſt be conſidered that no man who undertakes merely to methodiſe or illuſtrate a ſyſtem, pretends to be its author.

In his metaphyſical diſquiſitions, it was obſerved by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *ſpace* with that of *empty*

empty ſpace, and did not conſider that though ſpace might be without matter, yet matter, being extended, could not be without ſpace.

Few books have been peruſed by me with greater pleaſure than his *Improvement of the Mind*, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Underſtanding*, but they are ſo expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the higheſt degree uſeful and pleaſing. Whoever has the care of inſtructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatiſes of Theology as diſtinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever he took in hand was, by his inceſſant ſolicitude for ſouls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffuſed over his works: under his direction it may be truly ſaid, *Theologiæ Philoſophia ancillatur*, philoſophy is ſubſervient to evangelical inſtruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at leaſt wiſhing, to be better. The attention

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is caught by indirect inſtruction, and he that ſat down only to reaſon is on a ſudden compelled to pray.

It was therefore with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unſolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Divinity. Academical honours would have more value, if they were always beſtowed with equal judgement.

He continued many years to ſtudy and to preach, and to do good by his inſtruction and example; till at laſt the infirmities of age diſabled him from the more laborious part of his miniſterial functions, and, being no longer capable of publick duty, he offered to remit the ſalary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the reſignation.

By degrees his weakneſs increaſed, and at laſt confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired Nov. 25, 1748, in the ſeventy-fifth year of his age.

Few men have left behind ſuch purity of character, or ſuch monuments of laborious piety. He has provided inſtruction for all ages, from thoſe who are liſping their firſt leſſons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor ſpiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reaſoning, and the ſcience of the ſtars.

His character, therefore, muſt be formed from the multiplicity and diverſity of his attainments, rather than from any ſingle performance; for it would not be ſafe to claim for him the higheſt rank in any ſingle denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled, if he had not divided his powers to different purſuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have ſtood high among the authors with whom he is now aſſociated. For his judgement was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice diſcernment; his imagination, as the *Dacian Battle*

proves, was vigorous and active, and the ſtores of knowledge were large by which his imagination was to be ſupplied. His ear was well-tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unſatisfactory. The paucity of its topicks enforces perpetual repetition, and the ſanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction. It is ſufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other ſubjects ſeldom riſe higher than might be expected from the amuſements of a Man of Letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or leſs laboured, or as the occaſion was more or leſs favourable to invention.

He writes too often without regular meaſures, and too often in blank verſe; the rhymes are not always ſufficiently correſpondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expreſſive of characters. His lines are commonly ſmooth and eaſy, and his thoughts always religiouſly pure; but who is there that, to ſo much piety and innocence,

does not wiſh for a greater meaſure of ſprite-lineſs and vigour? But he is at leaſt one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be ſafely pleaſed; and happy will be that reader whoſe mind is diſpoſed by his verſes, or his proſe, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

A. PHILIPS.

A. PHILIPS.

A. PHILIPS.

OF the birth or early part of the life of AMBROSE PHILIPS I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's College in Cambridge, where he firſt ſolicited the notice of the world by ſome Engliſh verſes, in the Collection publiſhed by the Univerſity on the death of queen Mary.

From this time how he was employed, or in what ſtation he paſſed his life, is not yet diſcovered. He muſt have publiſhed his Paſtorals before the year 1708, becauſe they are evidently prior to thoſe of Pope.

He afterwards (1709) addreſſed to the univerſal patron, the duke of Dorſet, a *poetical Letter from Copenhagen*, which was publiſhed in the *Tatler*, and is by Pope in one of his firſt Letters mentioned with high praiſe, as the production of a man *who could write very nobly*.

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore eaſily found acceſs to Addiſon and Steele; but his ardour ſeems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; ſince he was reduced to tranſlate the *Perſian Tales* for Tonſon, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many ſections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean ſound.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomiſing Hacket's *Life of Archbiſhop Williams*. The original book is written with ſuch depravity of genius, ſuch mixture of the fop and pedant, as has

has not often appeared. The Epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little ſpirit or vigour.

In 1712 he brought upon the ſtage *The Diſtreſt Mother*, almoſt a tranſlation of Racine's *Andromaque*. Such a work requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his intereſt. Before the appearance of the play a whole *Spectator*, none indeed of the beſt, was devoted to its praiſe; while it yet continued to be acted, another *Spectator* was written, to tell what impreſſion it made upon Sir Roger; and on the firſt night a ſelect audience, ſays Pope *, was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the moſt ſucceſsful Epilogue that was ever yet ſpoken on the Engliſh theatre. The three firſt nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the play, but whenever it is recalled to the ſtage, where by peculiar fortune,

* Spence.

though

though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epilogue is ſtill expected, and is ſtill ſpoken.

The propriety of Epilogues in general, and conſequently of this, was queſtioned by a correſpondent of the *Spectator*, whoſe Letter was undoubtedly admitted for the ſake of the Anſwer, which ſoon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to ſtimulate curioſity and continue attention. It may be diſcovered in the defence, that Prior's Epilogue to *Phædra* had a little excited jealouſy; and ſomething of Prior's plan may be diſcovered in the performance of his rival.

Of this diſtinguiſhed Epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addiſon uſed to denominate * *the man who calls me couſin*; and when he was aſked how ſuch a ſilly fellow could write ſo well, replied, *The Epilogue was quite another thing when I ſaw it firſt.* It was known in Tonſon's family, and told to Garrick, that Addiſon was

* Spence.

himſelf

himſelf the author of it, and that when it had been at firſt printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were diſtributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the ſolicitation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his tranſlations from Sappho had been publiſhed in the *Spectator*; he was an important and diſtinguiſhed aſſociate of clubs witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happineſs, but that he ſhould be ſure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the firſt notice from the publick was his Six Paſtorals, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian ſcenes, probably found many readers, and might have long paſſed as a pleaſing amuſement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The ruſtic Poems of Theocritus were ſo highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that

that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whoſe Eclogues ſeem to have been conſidered as precluding all attempts of the ſame kind; for no ſhepherds were taught to ſing by any ſucceeding poet, till Nemeſian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was ſoon diſcovered that a dialogue of imaginary ſwains might be compoſed with little difficulty; becauſe the converſation of ſhepherds excludes profound or refined ſentiment; and, for images and deſcriptions, Satyrs and Fauns, and Naiads and Dryads, were always within call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, ſupplied variety, which, having a natural power to ſooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern Paſtorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word *Eclogue* of rural meaning, he ſuppoſed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions *Æglogues*, by which he meant to expreſs

preſs the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by ſubſequent writers, and amongſt others by our Spenſer.

More than a century afterwards (1498) Mantuan publiſhed his *Bucolicks* with ſuch ſucceſs, that they were ſoon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into ſchools, and taught as claſſical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, ſpread far and continued long. Mantuan was read, at leaſt in ſome of the inferior ſchools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the preſent century. The ſpeakers of Mantuan carried their diſquiſitions beyond the country, and cenſured the corruptions of the Church; and from him Spenſer learned to employ his ſwains on topicks of controverſy.

The Italians ſoon transferred Paſtoral Poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote *Arcadia* in proſe and verſe; Taſſo and Guarini wrote *Favole Boſchereccie*, or Sylvan Dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes

volumes with *Thyrſis* and *Damon*, and *Theſtylis* and *Phyllis*.

Philips thinks it *ſomewhat ſtrange to conceive how, in an age ſo addicted to the Muſes, Paſtoral Poetry never comes to be ſo much as thought upon*. His wonder ſeems very unſeaſonable; there had never, from the time of Spenſer, wanted writers to talk occaſionally of *Arcadia* and *Strephon*; and half the book, in which he firſt tried his powers, conſiſts of dialogues on queen Mary's death, between *Tityrus* and *Corydon*, or *Mopſus* and *Menalcas*. A ſeries or book of Paſtorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately publiſhed.

Not long afterwards Pope made the firſt diſplay of his powers in four Paſtorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenſer, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addiſon, and by Addiſon's companions, who were very willing to puſh him into reputation. The

Guardian

Guardian gave an account of Paſtoral, partly critical, and partly hiſtorical; in which, when the merit of the moderns is compared, Taſſo and Guarini are cenſured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry, and the pipe of the Paſtoral Muſe is tranſmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenſer, and from Spenſer to Philips.

With this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted; he therefore drew a compariſon of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himſelf always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The deſign of aggrandiſing himſelf he diſguiſed with ſuch dexterity, that, though Addiſon diſcovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of diſpleaſing Pope by publiſhing his paper. Publiſhed however it was (*Guard.* 40), and from that time Pope and Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence.

In

In poetical powers, of either praiſe or ſatire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addiſon's approbation, as diſaffected to the government.

Even with this he was not ſatisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to groſſer inſults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chaſtiſe Pope, who appears to have been extremely exaſperated; for in the firſt edition of his Letters he calls Philips *raſcal*, and in the laſt ſtill charges him with detaining in his hands the ſubſcriptions delivered to him by the Hanover Club.

I ſuppoſe it was never ſuſpected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with ſufficient meanneſs, the gratification of him by whoſe proſperity he was pained.

Men

Men ſometimes ſuffer by injudicious kindneſs; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the abſurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands which the firſt breath of contradiction blaſted.

When upon the ſucceſſion of the Houſe of Hanover every Whig expected to be happy, Philips ſeems to have obtained too little notice; he caught few drops of the golden ſhower, though he did not omit what flattery could perform. He was only made a Commiſſioner of the Lottery, (1717), and, what did not much elevate his character, a Juſtice of the Peace.

The ſucceſs of his firſt play muſt naturally diſpoſe him to turn his hopes towards the ſtage: he did not however ſoon commit himſelf to the mercy of an audience, but contented himſelf with the fame already acquired, till after nine years he produced (1721) *The Briton*, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the ſcenes, between *Vanoc* the Britiſh Prince

and *Valens* the Roman General, is confeſſed to be written with great dramatick ſkill, animated by ſpirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle, though he had been ſilent; for he exhibited another tragedy the ſame year, on the ſtory of *Humphry Duke of Glouceſter*. This tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His happieſt undertaking was of a paper called *The Freethinker*, in conjunction with aſſociates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then only miniſter of a pariſh in Southwark, was of ſo much conſequence to the government, that he was made firſt biſhop of Briſtol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may eaſily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter, would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be underſtood as implying only freedom from unreaſonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read; nor can impartial criticiſm recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal eſſays; but he knew how to practiſe the liberality of greatneſs and the fidelity of friendſhip. When he was advanced to the height of eccleſiaſtical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be ſlenderly ſupported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and, making him his ſecretary, added ſuch preferments, as enabled him to repreſent the county of Armagh in the Iriſh Parliament.

In December 1726 he was made ſecretary to the Lord Chancellor; and in Auguſt 1733 became judge of the Prerogative Court.

After the death of his patron he continued ſome years in Ireland; but at laſt longing, as it ſeems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtleſs ſurvived moſt of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagoniſt Pope. He found however the duke of Newcaſtle ſtill living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchaſed an annuity of four hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to paſs ſome years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him: he was ſtruck with a palſy, and died June 18, 1749, in his ſeventy-eighth year.

Of his perſonal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and ſkill in the ſword, and that in converſation he was ſolemn and pompous. He had great ſenſibility of cenſure, if judgement may be made by a ſingle ſtory which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordſhire. "Philips," ſaid he, "was "once at table, when I aſked him, How came "thy king of Epirus to drive oxen, and to "ſay *I'm goaded on by love?* After which "queſtion he never ſpoke again."

Of the *Diſtreſt Mother* not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no ſubject of criticiſm: his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the Poems compriſed in the late collection, the *Letter from Denmark* may be juſtly praiſed; the Paſtorals, which by the writer

of the *Guardian* were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the ruſtick Muſe, cannot ſurely be deſpicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which does not exiſt, nor ever exiſted, is not to be objected; the ſuppoſition of ſuch a ſtate is allowed to Paſtoral. In his other poems he cannot be denied the praiſe of lines ſometimes elegant; but he has ſeldom much force, or much comprehenſion. The pieces that pleaſe beſt are thoſe which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of *Namby Pamby*, the poems of ſhort lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the *ſteerer of the realm*, to miſs Pulteney in the nurſery; the numbers are ſmooth and ſpritely, and the diction is ſeldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet if they had been written by Addiſon they would have had admirers: little things are not valued but when they are done by thoſe who can do greater.

In his tranſlations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obſcurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his

ſublimity; he will be allowed, if he has leſs fire, to have more ſmoke.

He has added nothing to Engliſh poetry, yet at leaſt half his book deſerves to be read: perhaps he valued moſt himſelf that part, which the critick would reject.

W E S T.

WEST.

GILBERT WEST is one of the writers of whom I regret my inability to give a ſufficient account; the intelligence which my enquiries have obtained is general and ſcanty.

He was the ſon of the reverend Dr. Weſt; perhaps him who publiſhed *Pindar* at Oxford about the beginning of this century. His mother was ſiſter to Sir Richard Temple, afterwards lord Cobham. His father, purpoſing to educate him for the Church, ſent him firſt to Eton, and afterwards to Oxford; but he was ſeduced to a more airy mode of life, by a commiſſion in a troop of horſe procured him by his uncle.

He

He continued ſome time in the army; though it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that he never ſunk into a mere ſoldier, nor ever loſt the love or much neglected the purſuit of learning; and afterwards, finding himſelf more inclined to civil employment, he laid down his commiſſion, and engaged in buſineſs under the lord Townſhend, then ſecretary of ſtate, with whom he attended the king to Hanover.

His adherence to lord Townſhend ended in nothing but a nomination (May 1729) to be clerk-extraordinary of the Privy Council, which produced no immediate profit; for it only placed him in a ſtate of expectation and right of ſucceſſion, and it was very long before a vacancy admitted him to profit.

Soon afterwards he married, and ſettled himſelf in a very pleaſant houſe at Wickham in Kent, where he devoted himſelf to learning, and to piety. Of his learning the late Collection exhibits evidence, which would have been yet fuller if the diſſertations which accompany his verſion of Pindar had not been

been improperly omitted. Of his piety the influence has, I hope, been extended far by his *Obſervations on the Reſurrection*, publiſhed in 1747, for which the Univerſity of Oxford created him a Doctor of Laws by diploma (March 30, 1748); and perhaps it may not be without effect to tell, that he read prayers every evening to his family. Craſhaw is now not the only maker of verſes to whom may be given the two venerable names of *Poet and Saint*.

He was very often viſited by Lyttelton and Pitt, who, when they were weary of faction and debates, uſed at Wickham to find books and quiet, a decent table, and literary converſation. There is at Wickham a walk made by Pitt; and, what is of far more importance, at Wickham Lyttelton received that conviction which produced his *Diſſertation on St. Paul*.

Mr. Weſt's income was not large; and his friends endeavoured, but without ſucceſs, to obtain an augmentation. It is reported, that the education of the young prince was offered to him, but that he required a more

extenſive power of ſuperintendence than it was thought proper to allow him.

In time, however, his revenue was improved; he lived to have one of the lucrative clerkſhips of the Privy Council (1752), and Mr. Pitt at laſt had it in his power to make him treaſurer of Chelſea Hoſpital.

He was now ſufficiently rich; but wealth came too late to be long enjoyed: nor could it ſecure him from the calamities of life; he loſt (1755) his only ſon; and the year after (March 26), a ſtroke of the palſy brought to the grave one of the few poets to whom the grave needed not to be terrible.

Of his tranſlations I have only compared the firſt Olympick Ode with the original, and found my expectation ſurpaſſed, both by its elegance and its exactneſs. He does not confine himſelf to his author's train of ſtanzas; for he ſaw that the difference of the languages required a different mode of verſification. The firſt ſtrophe is eminently happy; in the ſecond he has a little ſtrayed from Pindar's meaning, who ſays, *if thou, my ſoul,*

wiſheſt

wiſheſt to ſpeak of games, look not in the deſert ſky for a planet hotter than the ſun, nor ſhall we tell of nobler games than thoſe of Olympia. He is ſometimes too paraphraſtical. Pindar beſtows upon Hiero an epithet, which, in one word, ſignifies *delighting in horſes*; a word which, in the tranſlation, generates theſe lines:

Hiero's royal brows, whoſe care
Tends the courſer's noble breed,
Pleas'd to nurſe the pregnant mare,
Pleas'd to train the youthful ſteed.

Pindar ſays of Pelops, that *he came alone in the dark to the White Sea*; and Weſt,

Near the billow-beaten ſide
Of the foam-beſilver'd main,
Darkling, and alone, he ſtood:

which however is leſs exuberant than the former paſſage.

A work of this kind muſt, in a minute examination, diſcover many imperfections; but Weſt's verſion, ſo far as I have conſidered it, appears to be the product of great labour and great abilities.

His

His *Inſtitution of the Garter* (1742) is written with ſufficient knowledge of the manners that prevailed in the age to which it is referred, and with great elegance of diction; but, for want of a proceſs of events, neither knowledge nor elegance preſerve the reader from wearineſs.

His *Imitations of Spenſer* are very ſucceſsfully performed, both with reſpect to the metre, the language, and the fiction; and being engaged at once by the excellence of the ſentiments, and the artifice of the copy, the mind has two amuſements at once. But ſuch compoſitions are not to be reckoned among the great atchievements of intellects, becauſe their effect is local and temporary; they appeal not to reaſon or paſſion, but to memory, and pre-ſuppoſe an accidental and artificial ſtate of mind. An Imitation of Spenſer is nothing to a reader, however acute, by whom Spenſer has never been peruſed. Works of this kind may deſerve praiſe, as proofs of great induſtry, and great nicety of obſervation; but the higheſt praiſe, the praiſe of genius, they cannot claim. The nobleſt beauties

beauties of art are thoſe of which the effect is co-extended with rational nature, or at leaſt with the whole circle of poliſhed life; what is leſs than this can be only pretty, the plaything of faſhion, and the amuſement of a day.

THERE is in the *Adventurer* a paper of verſes given to one of the authors as Mr. Weſt's, and ſuppoſed to have been written by him. It ſhould not be concealed, however, that it is printed with Mr. Jago's name in Dodſley's Collection, and is mentioned as his in a Letter of Shenſtone's. Perhaps Weſt gave it without naming the author; and Hawkeſworth, receiving it from him, thought it his; for his he thought it, as he told me, and as he tells the public.

COLLINS.

COLLINS.

COLLINS.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chicheſter on the twenty-fifth of December, about 1720. His father was a hatter of good reputation. He was in 1733, as Dr. Warton has kindly informed me, admitted ſcholar of Wincheſter College, where he was educated by Dr. Burton. His Engliſh exerciſes were better than his Latin.

He firſt courted the notice of the publick by ſome verſes to a *Lady weeping*, publiſhed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

In 1740, he ſtood firſt in the liſt of the ſcholars to be received in ſucceſſion at New

College; but unhappily there was no vacancy. This was the original misfortune of his life. He became a Commoner of Queen's College, probably with a ſcanty maintenance; but was in about half a year elected a *Demy* of Magdalen College, where he continued till he had taken a Bachelor's degree, and then ſuddenly left the Univerſity; for what reaſon I know not that he told.

He now (about 1744) came to London a literary adventurer, with many projects in his head, and very little money in his pocket. He deſigned many works; but his great fault was irreſolution, or the frequent calls of immediate neceſſity broke his ſchemes, and ſuffered him to purſue no ſettled purpoſe. A man, doubtful of his dinner, or trembling at a creditor, is not much diſpoſed to abſtracted meditation, or remote enquiries. He publiſhed propoſals for a Hiſtory of the Revival of Learning; and I have heard him ſpeak with great kindneſs of Leo the Tenth, and with keen reſentment of his taſteleſs ſucceſſor. But probably not a page of the Hiſtory was ever written. He planned ſeveral tragedies, but he only planned them.

He

He wrote now-and-then odes and other poems, and did ſomething, however little.

About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge conſiderable, his views extenſive, his converſation elegant, and his diſpoſition chearful. By degrees I gained his confidence; and one day was admitted to him when he was immured by a bailiff, that was prowling in the ſtreet. On this occaſion recourſe was had to the bookſellers, who, on the credit of a tranſlation of Ariſtotle's Poeticks, which he engaged to write with a large commentary, advanced as much money as enabled him to eſcape into the country. He ſhewed me the guineas ſafe in his hand. Soon afterwards his uncle, Mr. Martin, a lieutenant-colonel, left him about two thouſand pounds; a ſum which Collins could ſcarcely think exhauſtible, and which he did not live to exhauſt. The guineas were then repaid, and the tranſlation neglected.

But man is not born for happineſs. Collins, who, while he *ſtudied to live*, felt no evil but poverty, no ſooner *lived to ſtudy* than

his life was aſſailed by more dreadful calamities, diſeaſe and inſanity.

Having formerly written his character, while perhaps it was yet more diſtinctly impreſſed upon my memory, I ſhall inſert it here.

" Mr. Collins was a man of extenſive literature, and of vigorous faculties. He was acquainted not only with the learned tongues, but with the Italian, French, and Spaniſh languages. He had employed his mind chiefly upon works of fiction, and ſubjects of fancy; and, by indulging ſome peculiar habits of thought, was eminently delighted with thoſe flights of imagination which paſs the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a paſſive acquieſcence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monſters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repoſe by the water-falls of Elyſian gardens.

" This was however the character rather of his inclination than his genius; the grandeur

deur of wildneſs, and the novelty of extravagance, were always deſired by him, but were not always attained. Yet as diligence is never wholly loſt; if his efforts ſometimes cauſed harſhneſs and obſcurity, they likewiſe produced in happier moments ſublimity and ſplendour. This idea which he had formed of excellence, led him to oriental fictions and allegorical imagery; and perhaps, while he was intent upon deſcription, he did not ſufficiently cultivate ſentiment. His poems are the productions of a mind not deficient in fire, nor unfurniſhed with knowledge either of books or life, but ſomewhat obſtructed in its progreſs by deviation in queſt of miſtaken beauties.

" His morals were pure, and his opinions pious: in a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of diſſipation, it cannot be expected that any character ſhould be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almoſt deſtroyed; and long aſſociation with fortuitous companions will at laſt relax the ſtrictneſs of truth, and abate the fervour of ſincerity. That this man, wiſe and virtuous as he was,

paſſed always unentangled through the ſnares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be ſaid that at leaſt he preſerved the ſource of action unpolluted, that his principles were never ſhaken, that his diſtinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or deſign, but proceeded from ſome unexpected preſſure, or caſual temptation.

" The latter part of his life cannot be remembered but with pity and ſadneſs. He languiſhed ſome years under that depreſſion of mind which enchains the faculties without deſtroying them, and leaves reaſon the knowledge of right without the power of purſuing it. Theſe clouds which he perceived gathering on his intellects, he endeavoured to diſperſe by travel, and paſſed into France; but found himſelf conſtrained to yield to his malady, and returned. He was for ſome time confined in a houſe of lunaticks, and afterwards retired to the care of his ſiſter in Chicheſter, where death in 1756 came to his relief.

"After his return from France, the writer of this character paid him a viſit at Iſlington, where he was waiting for his ſiſter, whom he had directed to meet him: there was then nothing of diſorder diſcernible in his mind by any but himſelf; but he had withdrawn from ſtudy, and travelled with no other book than an Engliſh Teſtament, ſuch as children carry to the ſchool: when his friend took it into his hand, out of curioſity to ſee what companion a Man of Letters had choſen, *I have but one book*, ſays Collins, *but that is the beſt.*"

Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converſe, and whom I yet remember with tenderneſs.

He was viſited at Chicheſter, in his laſt illneſs, by his learned friends Dr. Warton and his brother; to whom he ſpoke with diſapprobation of his Oriental Eclogues, as not ſufficiently expreſſive of Aſiatick manners, and called them his Iriſh Eclogues. He ſhewed them, at the ſame time, an ode inſcribed to Mr. John Hume, on the ſuperſtitions

ſtitions of the Highlands; which they thought ſuperior to his other works, but which no ſearch has yet found.

His diſorder was not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleneſs, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers. What he ſpoke wanted neither judgement nor ſpirit; but a few minutes exhauſted him, ſo that he was forced to reſt upon the couch, till a ſhort ceſſation reſtored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour.

The approaches of this dreadful malady he began to feel ſoon after his uncle's death; and, with the uſual weakneſs of men ſo diſeaſed, eagerly ſnatched that temporary relief with which the table and the bottle flatter and ſeduce. But his health continually declined, and he grew more and more burthenſome to himſelf.

To what I have formerly ſaid of his writings may be added, that his diction was often harſh, unſkilfully laboured, and injudiciouſly ſelected. He affected the obſolete when it

was not worthy of revival; and he puts his words out of the common order, ſeeming to think, with ſome later candidates for fame, that not to write proſe is certainly to write poetry. His lines commonly are of ſlow motion, clogged and impeded with cluſters of conſonants. As men are often eſteemed who cannot be loved, ſo the poetry of Collins may ſometimes extort praiſe when it gives little pleaſure.

Mr. Collins's firſt production is added here from the *Poetical Calendar:*

TO MISS AURELIA C——R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING.

Ceaſe, fair Aurelia, ceaſe to mourn;
Lament not Hannah's happy ſtate;
You may be happy in your turn,
And ſeize the treaſure you regret.

With Love united Hymen ſtands,
And ſoftly whiſpers to your charms;
"Meet but your lover in my bands,
"You'll find your ſiſter in his arms."

DYER.

D Y E R.

D Y E R.

JOHN DYER, of whom I have no other account to give than his own Letters, publiſhed with Hughes's correſpondence, and the notes added by the editor, have afforded me, was born in 1700, the ſecond ſon of Robert Dyer of Aberglaſney, in Caermarthenſhire, a ſolicitor of great capacity and note.

He paſſed through Weſtminſter-ſchool under the care of Dr. Freind, and was then called home to be inſtructed in his father's profeſſion. But his father died ſoon, and he took no delight in the ſtudy of the law, but, having always amuſed himſelf with drawing,

drawing, reſolved to turn painter, and became pupil to Mr. Richardſon, an artiſt then of high reputation, but now better known by his books than by his pictures.

Having ſtudied awhile under his maſter, he became, as he tells his friend, an itinerant painter, and wandered about South Wales and the parts adjacent; but he mingled poetry with painting, and about 1727 printed *Grongar Hill* in Lewis's Miſcellany.

Being, probably, unſatisfied with his own proficiency, he, like other painters, travelled to Italy; and coming back in 1740, publiſhed the *Ruins of Rome*.

If his poem was written ſoon after his return, he did not make much uſe of his acquiſitions, whatever they might be; for decline of health, and love of ſtudy, determined him to the church. He therefore entered into orders; and, it ſeems, married about the ſame time a lady of the name of *Enſor*; "whoſe grand-mother," ſays he, "was a "Shakſpeare, deſcended from a brother of "every body's Shakſpeare;" by her, in 1756,

1756, he had a ſon and three daughters living.

His eccleſiaſtical proviſion was a long time but ſlender. His firſt patron, Mr. Harper, gave him, in 1741, Calthorp in Leiceſterſhire of eighty pounds a year, on which he lived ten years, and then exchanged it for Belchford in Lincolnſhire of ſeventy-five. His condition now began to mend. In 1752, Sir John Heathcote gave him Coningſby, of one hundred and twenty pounds a year; and afterwards the Chancellor added Kirkby, of one hundred and ten. He complains that the repair of the houſe at Coningſby, and other expences, took away the profit.

About the time of his removal to Coningſby he publiſhed the *Fleece*, his greateſt poetical work; of which I will not ſuppreſs a ludicrous ſtory. Dodſley the bookſeller was one day mentioning it to a critical viſiter, with more expectation of ſucceſs than the other could eaſily admit. In the converſation the author's age was aſked; and being repreſented as advanced in life, *He will*, ſaid the critick, *be buried in woollen*.

He did not indeed long ſurvive that publication, nor long enjoy the increaſe of his preferments; for in 1758 he died.

Dyer is not a poet of bulk or dignity ſufficient to require an elaborate criticiſm. *Grongar Hill* is the happieſt of his productions: it is not indeed very accurately written; but the ſcenes which it diſplays are ſo pleaſing, the images which they raiſe ſo welcome to the mind, and the reflections of the writer ſo conſonant to the general ſenſe or experience of mankind, that when it is once read, it will be read again.

The idea of the *Ruins of Rome* ſtrikes more but pleaſes leſs, and the title raiſes greater expectation than the performance gratifies. Some paſſages, however, are conceived with the mind of a poet; as when, in the neighbourhood of dilapidating Edifices, he ſays,

——At dead of night
The hermit oft, 'midſt his oriſons, hears
Aghaſt, the voice of Time diſparting towers.

Of *The Fleece*, which never became popular, and is now univerſally neglected, I can

can ſay little that is likely to recall it to attention. The woolcomber and the poet appear to me ſuch diſcordant natures, that an attempt to bring them together is to *couple the ſerpent with the fowl.* When Dyer, whoſe mind was not unpoetical, has done his utmoſt, by intereſting his reader in our native commodity, by interſperſing rural imagery, and incidental digreſſions, by cloathing ſmall images in great words, and by all the writer's arts of deluſion, the meanneſs naturally adhering, and the irreverence habitually annexed to trade and manufacture, ſink him under inſuperable oppreſſion; and the diſguſt which blank verſe, encumbering and encumbered, ſuperadds to an unpleaſing ſubject, ſoon repels the reader, however willing to be pleaſed.

Let me however honeſtly report whatever may counterbalance this weight of cenſure. I have been told that Akenſide, who, upon a poetical queſtion, has a right to be heard, ſaid, "That he would regulate his opinion "of the reigning taſte by the fate of Dyer's "*Fleece*; for, if that were ill received, he "ſhould not think it any longer reaſonable "to expect fame from excellence."

SHENSTONE.

SHENSTONE.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE, the ſon of Thomas Shenſtone and Anne Pen, was born in November 1714, at the Leaſowes in Hales-Owen, one of thoſe inſulated diſtricts which, in the diviſion of the kingdom, was appended, for ſome reaſon not now diſcoverable, to a diſtant county; and which, though ſurrounded by Warwickſhire and Worceſterſhire, belongs to Shropſhire, though perhaps thirty miles diſtant from any other part of it.

He learned to read of an old dame, whom his poem of the *School-miſtreſs* has delivered to poſterity; and ſoon received ſuch delight

from books, that he was always calling for new entertainment, and expected that when any of the family went to market a new book ſhould be brought him, which, when it came, was in fondneſs carried to bed and laid by him. It is ſaid, that when his requeſt had been neglected, his mother wrapped up a piece of wood of the ſame form, and pacified him for the night.

As he grew older, he went for a while to the Grammar-ſchool in Hales-Owen, and was placed afterwards with Mr. Crumpton, an eminent ſchool-maſter at Solihul, where he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the quickneſs of his progreſs.

When he was young (June 1724) he was deprived of his father, and ſoon after (Auguſt 1726) of his grandfather; and was, with his brother, who died afterwards unmarried, left to the care of his grandmother, who managed the eſtate.

From ſchool he was ſent in 1732 to Pembroke-College in Oxford, a ſociety which for half a century has been eminent for Engliſh poetry

poetry and elegant literature. Here it appears that he found delight and advantage; for he continued his name there ten years, though he took no degree. After the firſt four years he put on the Civilian's gown, but without ſhewing any intention to engage in the profeſſion.

About the time when he went to Oxford, the death of his grandmother devolved his affairs to the care of the reverend Mr. Dolman of Brome in Staffordſhire, whoſe attention he always mentioned with gratitude.

At Oxford he employed himſelf upon Engliſh poetry; and in 1737 publiſhed a ſmall Miſcellany, without his name.

He then for a time wandered about, to acquaint himſelf with life; and was ſometimes at London, ſometimes at Bath, or any other place of publick reſort; but he did not forget his poetry. He publiſhed in 1740 his *Judgement of Hercules*, addreſſed to Mr. Lyttelton, whoſe intereſt he ſupported with great warmth at an election: this was two years afterwards followed by the *School-miſtreſs*.

Mr.

Mr. Dolman, to whoſe care he was indebted for his eaſe and leiſure, died in 1745, and the care of his own fortune now fell upon him. He tried to eſcape it a while, and lived at his houſe with his tenants, who were diſtantly related; but, finding that imperfect poſſeſſion inconvenient, he took the whole eſtate into his own hands, more to the improvement of its beauty than the increaſe of its produce.

Now began his delight in rural pleaſures, and his ambition of rural elegance: he began from this time to point his proſpects, to diverſify his ſurface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters; which he did with ſuch judgement and ſuch fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great, and the admiration of the ſkilful; a place to be viſited by travellers, and copied by deſigners. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view; to make water run where it will be heard, or to ſtagnate where it will be ſeen; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleaſed, and to thicken the plantation where there is ſomething to be hidden,

hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire; perhaps a ſullen and ſurly ſpeculator may think ſuch performances rather the ſport than the buſineſs of human reaſon. But it muſt be at leaſt confeſſed, that to embelliſh the form of Nature is an innocent amuſement; and ſome praiſe muſt be allowed by the moſt ſupercilious obſerver to him, who does beſt what ſuch multitudes are contending to do well.

This praiſe was the praiſe of Shenſtone; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttelton was his neighbour and his rival, whoſe empire, ſpacious and opulent, looked with diſdain on the *petty State* that *appeared behind it.* For a while the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow that was trying to make himſelf admired; but when by degrees the Leaſowes forced themſelves into notice, they took care to defeat the curioſity which they could not ſuppreſs, by conducting their viſitants perverſely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenſtone

ſtone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation there will be vanity, and where there is vanity there will be folly.

The pleaſure of Shenſtone was all in his eye; he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raiſed his indignation more than to aſk if there were any fiſhes in his water.

His houſe was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of his grounds. When he came home from his walks he might find his floors flooded by a ſhower through the broken roof; but could ſpare no money for its reparation.

In time his expences brought clamours about him, that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's ſong; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies. He ſpent his eſtate in adorning it, and his death was probably haſtened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that ſpent its oil in blazing. It is ſaid, that if he had lived a little longer he would have been aſſiſted by a penſion: ſuch bounty could not have been ever

ever more properly beſtowed; but that it was ever aſked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.

He died at the Leaſowes, of a putrid fever, about five on Friday morning, February 11, 1763; and was buried by the ſide of his brother in the church-yard of Hales-Owen.

He was never married, though he might have obtained the lady, whoever ſhe was, to whom his *Paſtoral Ballad* was addreſſed. He is repreſented by his friend Dodſley as a man of great tenderneſs and generoſity, kind to all that were within his influence; but, if once offended, not eaſily appeaſed; inattentive to œconomy, and careleſs of his expences; in his perſon larger than the middle ſize, with ſomething clumſy in his form; very negligent of his cloaths, and remarkable for wearing his grey hair in a particular manner; for he held that the faſhion was no rule of dreſs, and that every man was to ſuit his appearance to his natural form.

His mind was not very comprehenſive, nor his curioſity active; he had no value for thoſe parts

parts of knowledge which he had not himſelf cultivated.

His life was unſtained by any crime; the Elegy on *Jeſſy*, which has been ſuppoſed to relate an unfortunate and criminal amour of his own, was known by his friends to have been ſuggeſted by the ſtory of Miſs Godfrey in Richardſon's *Pamela*.

What Gray thought of his character, from the peruſal of his Letters, was this:

"I have read too an octavo volume of "Shenſtone's Letters. Poor man! he was "always wiſhing for money, for fame, and "other diſtinctions; and his whole philo-"ſophy conſiſted in living againſt his will in "retirement, and in a place which his taſte "had adorned; but which he only enjoyed "when people of note came to ſee and com-"mend it: his correſpondence is about no-"thing elſe but this place and his own "writings, with two or three neighbouring "clergymen, who wrote verſes too."

His poems conſiſt of elegies, odes, and ballads, humorous ſallies, and moral pieces.

His

His conception of an Elegy he has in his Preface very judiciouſly and diſcriminately explained. It is, according to his account, the effuſion of a contemplative mind, ſometimes plaintive, and always ſerious, and therefore ſuperior to the glitter of ſlight ornaments. His compoſitions ſuit not ill to this deſcription. His topicks of praiſe are the domeſtick virtues, and his thoughts are pure and ſimple; but, wanting combination, they want variety. The peace of ſolitude, the innocence of inactivity, and the unenvied ſecurity of an humble ſtation, can fill but a few pages. That of which the eſſence is uniformity will be ſoon deſcribed. His Elegies have therefore too much reſemblance of each other.

The lines are ſometimes, ſuch as Elegy requires, ſmooth and eaſy; but to this praiſe his claim is not conſtant: his diction is often harſh, improper, and affected; his words ill-coined, or ill-choſen, and his phraſe unſkilfully inverted.

The

The Lyrick Poems are almoſt all of the light and airy kind, ſuch as trip lightly and nimbly along, without the load of any weighty meaning. From theſe, however, *Rural Elegance* has ſome right to be excepted. I once heard it praiſed by a very learned lady; and though the lines are irregular, and the thoughts diffuſed with too much verboſity, yet it cannot be denied to contain both philoſophical argument and poetical ſpirit.

Of the reſt I cannot think any excellent; the *Skylark* pleaſes me beſt, which has however more of the epigram than of the ode.

But the four parts of his *Paſtoral Ballad* demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is paſtoral; an intelligent reader, acquainted with the ſcenes of real life, ſickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *ſheep*, and the *kids*, which it is not neceſſary to bring forward to notice, for the poet's art is ſelection, and he ought to ſhew the beauties without the groſſneſs of the country life. His ſtanza ſeems to have been choſen in imitation of Rowe's *Deſpairing Shepherd*.

In

In the firſt part are two paſſages, to which if any mind denies its ſympathy, it has no acquaintance with love or nature:

I priz'd every hour that went by,
Beyond all that had pleas'd me before;
But now they are paſt, and I ſigh,
And I grieve that I priz'd them no more.

When forc'd the fair nymph to forgo,
What anguiſh I felt in my heart!
Yet I thought—but it might not be ſo,
'Twas with pain that ſhe ſaw me depart.

She gaz'd, as I ſlowly withdrew;
My path I could hardly diſcern;
So ſweetly ſhe bade me adieu,
I thought that ſhe bade me return.

In the ſecond this paſſage has its prettineſs, though it be not equal to the former:

I have found out a gift for my fair;
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:
But let me that plunder forbear,
She will ſay 'twas a barbarous deed:

For he ne'er could be true, ſhe averr'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young;
And I lov'd her the more, when I heard
Such tenderneſs fall from her tongue.

In the third he mentions the common places of amorous poetry with ſome addreſs:

'Tis his with mock paſſion to glow;
'Tis his in ſmooth tales to unfold,
How her face is as bright as the ſnow,
And her boſom, be ſure, is as cold:

How the nightingales labour the ſtrain,
With the notes of his charmer to vie;
How they vary their accents in vain,
Repine at her triumphs, and die.

In the fourth I find nothing better than this natural ſtrain of Hope:

Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes?
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repoſe.

Yet Time may diminiſh the pain:
The flower, and the ſhrub, and the tree,
Which I rear'd for her pleaſure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me.

His *Levities* are by their title exempted from the ſeverities of criticiſm; yet it may be

be remarked, in a few words, that his humour is ſometimes groſs, and ſeldom ſpritely.

Of the Moral Poems the firſt is the *Choice of Hercules*, from Xenophon. The numbers are ſmooth, the diction elegant, and the thoughts juſt; but ſomething of vigour perhaps is ſtill to be wiſhed, which it might have had by brevity and compreſſion. His *Fate of Delicacy* has an air of gaiety, but not a very pointed general moral. His blank verſes, thoſe that can read them may probably find to be like the blank verſes of his neighbours. *Love and Honour* is derived from the old ballad, *Did you not hear of a Spaniſh Lady*—I wiſh it well enough to wiſh it were in rhyme.

The *School-miſtreſs*, of which I know not what claim it has to ſtand among the Moral Works, is ſurely the moſt pleaſing of Shenſtone's performances. The adoption of a particular ſtyle, in light and ſhort compoſitions, contributes much to the increaſe of pleaſure: we are entertained at once with two imitations, of nature in the ſentiments, of the original author in the ſtyle, and be-

tween them the mind is kept in perpetual employment.

The general recommendation of Shenſtone is eaſineſs and ſimplicity; his general defect is want of comprehenſion and variety. Had his mind been better ſtored with knowledge, whether he could have been great, I know not; he could certainly have been agreeable.

YOUNG.

YOUNG.

THE following Life was written, at my requeſt, by a gentleman who had better information than I could eaſily have obtained; and the publick will perhaps wiſh that I had ſolicited and obtained more ſuch favours from him.

" Dear Sir,

" In conſequence of our different converſations about authentick materials for the Life of Young, I ſend you the following detail. It is not, I confeſs, immediately in the line of my profeſſion; but hard indeed is our fate at the bar, if we may not call a few hours now-and-then our own.

Of great men ſomething muſt always be ſaid to gratify curioſity. Of the great author of the *Night Thoughts* much has been told of which there never could have been proofs; and little care appears to have been taken to tell that of which proofs, with little trouble, might have been procured.

EDWARD YOUNG was born at Upham, near Wincheſter, in June 1681. He was the ſon of Edward Young, at that time Fellow of Wincheſter College and Rector of Upham; who was the ſon of Jo. Young of Woodhay in Berkſhire, ſtyled by Wood *gentleman*. In September 1682 the Poet's father was collated to the prebend of Gillingham Minor, in the church of Sarum, by biſhop Ward. On the childiſhneſs of Ward, his duties were neceſſarily performed by others. We learn from Wood, that, at a viſitation of Sprat, July the 12th, 1686, the Prebendary preached a Latin ſermon, afterwards publiſhed, with which the Biſhop was ſo pleaſed, that he told the Chapter he was concerned to find the preacher had one of the worſt prebends in their church. In conſequence of his

his merit and reputation, or of the intereſt of Lord Bradford (to whom, 1702, he dedicated two volumes of ſermons), he was, ſome time after, appointed chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and preferred to the deanry of Sarum. Jacob, who wrote in 1720, ſays, he was chaplain and clerk of the cloſet to the late Queen, who honoured him by ſtanding godmother to the Poet. His fellowſhip of Wincheſter he reſigned in favour of one Mr. Harris, who married his only daughter. The Dean died at Sarum, after a ſhort illneſs, in 1705, in the ſixty-third year of his age. On the Sunday after his deceaſe Biſhop Burnet preached at the cathedral, and began his ſermon with ſaying; "Death has been of late walking round "us, and making breach upon breach up-"on us, and has now carried away the head "of this body with a ſtroke; ſo that he, "whom you ſaw a week ago diſtributing "the holy myſteries, is now laid in the duſt. "But he ſtill lives in the many excellent di-"rections he has left us, both how to live "and how to die."

The

The Dean placed his ſon upon the foundation at Wincheſter College, where he had himſelf been educated. At this ſchool Edward Young remained till the election after his eighteenth birth-day, the period at which thoſe upon the foundation are ſuperannuated. Whether he did not betray his abilities early in life; or his maſters had not ſkill enough to diſcover in their pupil any marks of genius for which he merited reward; or no vacancy at Oxford afforded them an opportunity to beſtow upon him the reward provided for merit by William of Wykeham; certain it is, that to an Oxford fellowſhip our Poet did not ſucceed. By chance, or by choice, New College does not number among its Fellows him who wrote the *Night Thoughts*.

On the 13th of October, 1703, he was entered an Independent Member of New College, that he might live at little expence in the Warden's lodgings, who was a particular friend of his father, till he ſhould be qualified to ſtand for a fellowſhip at All-ſouls. In a few months the warden of New College died.

died. He then removed to Corpus College. The Preſident of this Society, from regard alſo for his father, invited him thither, in order to leſſen his academical expences. In 1708, he was nominated to a law fellowſhip at All-ſouls by Archbiſhop Tenniſon, into whoſe hands it came by devolution.—Such repeated patronage, while it juſtifies Burnet's praiſe of the father, reflects credit on the conduct of the ſon. The manner in which it was exerted ſeems to prove that the father did not leave behind him much wealth.

On the 23d of April, 1714, Young took his degree of Batchelor of Civil Laws, and his Doctor's degree on the 10th of June, 1719.

Soon after he went to Oxford, he diſcovered, it is ſaid, an inclination to take pupils. Whether he ever commenced tutor is not known. None has hitherto boaſted to have received his academical inſtruction from the author of the *Night Thoughts*. It is certain that his college was proud of him no leſs as a ſcholar than as a poet; for, in 1716, when the foundation of the Codrington Library

brary was laid, two years after he had taken his Batchelor's degree, he was appointed to ſpeak the Latin oration, which is at leaſt particular for being dedicated in Engliſh *To the Ladies of the Codrington Family.* To theſe he ſays, that " he was unavoidably flung into a ſingularity, by being obliged to write an epiſtle-dedicatory void of common-place, and ſuch an one as was never publiſhed before by any author whatever;—that this practice abſolved them from any obligation of reading what was preſented to them;—and that the bookſeller approved of it, becauſe it would make people ſtare, was abſurd enough, and perfectly right." Of this oration there is no appearance in his own edition of his works; and prefixed to an edition by Curll and Tonſon, in 1741, is a letter from Young to Curll (if Curll may be credited), dated December the 9th, 1739, wherein he ſays he has not leiſure to review what he formerly wrote, and adds, " I have " not the *Epiſtle to Lord Lanſdowne.* If you " will take my advice, I would have you " omit that, and the oration on *Codrington.* " I think the collection will ſell better with- " out them."

There

There are who relate, that, when firſt Young found himſelf independent, and his own maſter at All-ſouls, he was not the ornament to religion and morality which he afterwards became. The authority of his father, indeed, had ceaſed by his death 1705; and Young was certainly not aſhamed to be patronized by the infamous Wharton. But Wharton befriended in Young, perhaps, the poet, and particularly the tragedian. If virtuous authors muſt be patronized only by virtuous peers, who ſhall point them out?

Yet Pope is ſaid by Ruffhead to have told Warburton, that "Young had much of a ſublime genius, though without common ſenſe; ſo that his genius, having no guide, was perpetually liable to degenerate into bombaſt. This made him, paſs a *fooliſh youth*, the ſport of peers and poets: but his having a very good heart enabled him to ſupport the clerical character when he aſſumed it, firſt with decency, and afterwards with honour."

They

They who think ill of Young's morality in the early part of his life, may perhaps be wrong; but Tindal could not err in his opinion of Young's warmth and ability in the cauſe of religion. Tindal uſed to ſpend much of his time at All-ſouls. "The other "boys," ſaid the atheiſt, "I can always "anſwer, becauſe I always know whence "they have their arguments, which I have "read an hundred times; but that fellow "Young is continually peſtering me with "ſomething of his own." After all, Tindal and the cenſurers of Young may be reconcileable. Young might, for two or three years, have tried that kind of life, in which his natural principles would not ſuffer him to wallow long. If this were ſo, he has left behind him not only his evidence in favour of virtue, but the potent teſtimony of experience againſt vice.

Young perhaps aſcribed the good fortune of Addiſon to the *Poem to his Majeſty*, preſented, with a copy of verſes, to Somers; and hoped that he alſo might ſoar to wealth and honours on wings of the ſame kind. His

firſt poetical flight was when Queen Anne called up to the Houſe of Lords the ſons of the Earls of Northampton and Ayleſbury, and added, in one day, ten others to the number of Peers. In order to reconcile the people to one at leaſt of the new Lords, he publiſhed in 1712 *An Epiſtle to the Right Honourable George Lord Lanſdowne.* In this compoſition the poet pours out his panegyrick with the extravagance of a young man, who thinks his preſent ſtock of wealth will never be exhauſted.

The poem ſeems intended alſo to reconcile the publick to the late peace. This is endeavoured to be done by ſhewing that men are ſlain in war, and that in peace *harveſts wave, and commerce ſwells her ſail.* If this be humanity, it is not politicks. Another purpoſe of this epiſtle appears to have been, to prepare the publick for the reception of ſome tragedy of his own. His Lordſhip's patronage, he ſays, will not let him *repent his paſſion for the ſtage*;—and the particular praiſe beſtowed on *Othello* and *Oroonoko* ſeems to ſhew that ſome ſuch character as *Zanga* was even then in contemplation. The affectionate mention

mention of the death of his friend Harriſon of New College, at the cloſe of this poem, is an inſtance of Young's art, which diſplayed itſelf ſo fully thirty years afterwards in the *Night Thoughts*, of making the publick a party in his private ſorrow.

Should juſtice call upon you to cenſure this poem, it ought at leaſt to be remembered that he did not inſert it into his works; and that in the letter to Curll, as we have ſeen, he adviſes its omiſſion. The bookſellers, in the late Body of Engliſh Poetry, ſhould have diſtinguiſhed what was deliberately rejected by the reſpective authors. This I ſhall be careful to do with regard to Young. "I "think, ſays he, the following pieces in "*four* volumes to be the moſt excuſeable of "all that I have written; and I wiſh *leſs* "*apology* was needful for theſe. As there is "no recalling what is got abroad, the pieces "here republiſhed I have reviſed and cor-"rected, and rendered them as *pardonable* "as it was in my power to do."—Shall the gates of repentance be ſhut only againſt literary ſinners?

When

When Addiſon publiſhed *Cato* in 1713, Young had the honour of prefixing to it a recommendatory copy of verſes. This is one of the pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not republiſh.

On the appearance of his *Poem on the Laſt Day*, Addiſon did not return Young's compliment; but *The Engliſhman* of October 29, 1713, which was probably written by Addiſon, ſpeaks handſomely of this poem. The *Laſt Day* was publiſhed ſoon after the peace. The vice-chancellor's *imprimatur* (for it was firſt printed at Oxford) is dated May the 19th, 1713. From the Exordium Young appears to have ſpent ſome time on the compoſition of it. While other bards *with Britain's hero ſet their ſouls on fire*, he draws, he ſays, a deeper ſcene. Marlborough *had been* conſidered by Britain as her *hero*; but, when the *Laſt Day* was publiſhed, female cabal had blaſted for a time the laurels of Blenheim. This poem was probably finiſhed by Young as early as 1710; for part of it is printed in the *Tatler*. It was inſcribed to the Queen, in a dedication, which, for ſome

reaſon, he did not admit into his works. It tells her, that his only title to the great honour he now does himſelf is the obligation he formerly received from her royal indulgence. Of this obligation nothing is now known. Young is ſaid to have been engaged at a ſettled ſtipend as a writer for the Court. Yet who ſhall ſay this with certainty? In all modern periods of this country, the writers on one ſide have been regularly called Hirelings, and on the other Patriots.

Of the dedication, however, the complexion is clearly political. It ſpeaks in the higheſt terms of the late peace;—it gives her Majeſty praiſe indeed for her victories, but ſays that the author is more pleaſed to ſee her riſe from this lower world, ſoaring above the clouds, paſſing the firſt and ſecond heavens, and leaving the fixed ſtars behind her;—nor will he loſe her there, but keep her ſtill in view through the boundleſs ſpaces on the other ſide of Creation, in her journey towards eternal bliſs, till he behold the heaven of heavens open, and angels receiving and conveying her ſtill onward from the

ſtretch

ſtretch of his imagination, which tires in her purſuit, and falls back again to earth.

The Queen was ſoon called away from this lower world, to a place where human praiſe or human flattery are of little conſequence. If Young thought the dedication contained only the praiſe of truth, he ſhould not have omitted it in his works. Was he conſcious of the exaggeration of party? Then he ſhould not have written it. The poem itſelf is not without a glance to politicks, notwithſtanding the ſubject. The cry that the church was in danger, had not yet ſubſided. The *Laſt Day*, written by a layman, was much approved by the miniſtry, and their friends.

Before the Queen's death, *The Force of Religion, or Vanquiſhed Love*, was ſent into the world. This poem is founded on the execution of Lady Jane Gray and her huſband Lord Guildford in 1554—a ſtory choſen for the ſubject of a tragedy by Edmund Smith, and wrought into a tragedy by Rowe. The dedication of it to the counteſs of Saliſbury does not appear in his own edition. He

hopes it may be ſome excuſe for his preſumption that the ſtory could not have been read without thoughts of the Counteſs of Saliſbury, though it had been dedicated to another. "To behold," he proceeds, "a "perſon *only* virtuous, ſtirs in us a prudent "regret; to behold a perſon *only* amiable to "the ſight, warms us with a religious in- "dignation; but to turn our eyes on a "Counteſs of Saliſbury, gives us pleaſure "and improvement; it works a ſort of mi- "racle, occaſions the biaſs of our nature to "fall off from ſin, and makes our very "ſenſes and affections converts to our reli- "gion, and promoters of our duty." His flattery was as ready for the other ſex as for ours, and was at leaſt as well adapted.

Auguſt the 27th, 1714, Pope writes to his friend Jervas, that he is juſt arrived from Oxford—that every one was much concerned for the Queen's death, but that no panegyricks were ready yet for the King. Nothing like friendſhip had yet taken place between Pope and Young; for, ſoon after the event which Pope mentions, Young publiſhed a poem on the late Queen's death, and

his Majeſty's acceſſion to the throne. It is inſcribed to Addiſon, then ſecretary to the Lords Juſtices. Whatever was the obligation which he had formerly received from Anne, the poet appears to aim at ſomething of the ſame ſort from George. Of the poem the intention ſeems to have been, to ſhew that he had the ſame extravagant ſtrain of praiſe for a King as for a Queen. To diſcover, at the very outſet of a foreigner's reign, that the Gods bleſs his new ſubjects in ſuch a King, is ſomething more than praiſe. Neither was this deemed one of his *excuſeable pieces*. We do not find it in his works.

Young's father had been well acquainted with Lady Anne Wharton, the firſt wife of Thomas Wharton, Eſq; afterwards Marquis of Wharton—a Lady celebrated for her poetical talents by Burnet and by Waller. To the Dean of Sarum's viſitation ſermon, already mentioned, were added ſome copies of verſes "by that excellent poeteſs Mrs. "Anne Wharton," upon its being tranſlated into Engliſh, at the inſtance of Waller, by Atwood. Wharton, after he became ennobled, did not drop the ſon of his old friend. In him, during the ſhort time he

lived, Young found a patron, and in his diſſolute deſcendant a friend and a companion. The Marquis died in April 1715. The beginning of the next year the young Marquis ſet out upon his travels, from which he returned in about a twelvemonth. The beginning of 1717 carried him to Ireland; where, ſays the Biographia, "on the ſcore "of his extraordinary qualities, he had the "honour done him of being admitted, "though under age, to take his ſeat in the "Houſe of Lords."

With this unhappy character we might have preſumed, almoſt without evidence, that Young went to Ireland. From his Letter to Richardſon on *Original Compoſition*, it is clear he was, at ſome period of his life, in that country. "I remember," ſays he, in that Letter, ſpeaking of Swift, "as I and "others were taking with him an evening "walk, about a mile out of *Dublin*, he ſtopt "ſhort; we paſſed on; but, perceiving he "did not follow us, I went back, and found "him fixed as a ſtatue, and earneſtly gazing "upward at a noble elm, which in its up-"permoſt branches was much withered and "decayed.

" decayed. Pointing at it, he ſaid, " I ſhall " be like that tree, I ſhall die at top."—A note from Wharton, among Swift's Letters, clearly ſhews that this viſit to Ireland was paid when he had an opportunity of going thither with his avowed friend and patron.

From *The Engliſhman* it appears that a tragedy by Young was in the theatre ſo early as 1713; yet *Buſiris* was not brought upon Drury-Lane Stage till 1719. It was inſcribed to the Duke of Newcaſtle, " becauſe " the late inſtances he had received of his " Grace's undeſerved and uncommon favour, " in an affair of ſome conſequence, foreign " to the theatre, had taken from him the " privilege of chuſing a patron." The Dedication he afterwards ſuppreſſed.—This was followed in the year 1721 by *The Revenge*. Left at liberty now to chuſe his patron, he dedicated this famous tragedy to the Duke of Wharton. " Your Grace," ſays the Dedication, " has been pleaſed to make yourſelf " acceſſary to the following ſcenes, not only " by ſuggeſting the moſt beautiful incident " in them, but by making all poſſible proviſion for the ſucceſs of the whole."

That his Grace ſhould have ſuggeſted the incident to which he alludes, whatever that incident be, is not unlikely. The laſt mental exertion of the unhappy ſuperannuated young man, in his quarters at Lerida in Spain, was ſome ſcenes of a tragedy on the ſtory of Mary Queen of Scots.

Dryden dedicated *Marriage à la Mode* to Wharton's infamous relation Rocheſter; whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but as the promoter of his fortune. Young concludes his addreſs to Wharton thus—"My preſent fortune is his "bounty, and my future his care; which I "will venture to ſay will be always remem-"bered to his honour, ſince he, I know, in-"tended his generoſity as an encouragement "to merit, though, through his very par-"donable partiality to one who bears him "ſo ſincere a duty and reſpect, I happen to "receive the benefit of it." That he ever had ſuch a patron as Wharton, Young took all the pains in his power to conceal from the world, by excluding this Dedication from his works. He ſhould have remembered, that he

he at the ſame time concealed his obligation to Wharton for *the moſt beautiful incident* in what is ſurely not his leaſt beautiful compoſition. The paſſage juſt quoted is, in a poem afterwards addreſſed to Walpole, literally copied:

> Be this thy partial ſmile from cenſure free;
> 'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me;

While Young, who, in his *Love of Fame*, complains grievouſly how often *dedications waſh an Æthiopian white*, was painting an amiable Duke of Wharton in periſhable proſe, Pope was perhaps beginning to deſcribe the *ſcorn and wonder of his days* in laſting verſe.

To the patronage of ſuch a character, had Young ſtudied men as much as Pope, he would have known how little to have truſted. Young, however, was certainly indebted to it for ſomething material; and his Grace's regard for Young, added to his *Luſt of Praiſe*, procured to All-ſouls College a donation, which is not forgotten by the Dedication of *The Revenge*.

It

It will ſurprize you to ſee me cite ſecond Atkins, Caſe 136, Stiles *verſus* the Attorney General, 14 March 1740, as authority for the Life of a Poet. But Biographers do not always find ſuch certain guides as the oaths of thoſe they record. Chancellor Hardwicke was to determine whether two annuities granted by the Duke of Wharton to Young were for legal conſiderations. The firſt was dated the 24th of March, 1719, and accounted for his Grace's bounty in a ſtyle princely and commendable, if not legal— "conſidering that the publick good is ad- "vanced by the encouragement of learning "and the polite arts, and being pleaſed "therein with the attempts of Dr. Young, "in conſideration thereof, and of the love "he bare him, &c." The ſecond was dated the 10th of July, 1722. Young, on his examination, ſwore that he quitted the Exeter family, and refuſed an annuity of 100*l.* which had been offered him for his life, if he would continue tutor to Lord Burleigh, upon the preſſing ſolicitations of the Duke of Wharton, and his Grace's aſſurances of providing for him in a much more ample manner. It

alſo

alſo appeared that the Duke had given him a bond for 600 *l.* dated the 15th of March, 1721, in conſideration of his taking ſeveral journies, and being at great expences, in order to be choſen member of the Houſe of Commons at the Duke's deſire, and in conſideration of his not taking two livings of 200 *l.* and 400 *l.* in the gift of All-ſouls College, on his Grace's promiſes of ſerving and advancing him in the world.

This attempt to get into Parliament was at Cirenceſter, where Young ſtood a conteſted election. His Grace diſcovered in him talents for oratory as well as for poetry. Nor was this judgement wrong. Young, after he took orders, became a very popular preacher, and was much followed for the grace and animation of his delivery. By his oratorical talents he was once in his life, according to the Biographia, deſerted. As he was preaching in his turn at St. James's, he plainly perceived it was out of his power to command the attention of his audience. This ſo affected the feelings of the preacher, that he ſat back in the pulpit, and burſt into tears.—But to purſue his poetical life.

In

In 1719 he lamented the death of Addiſon, in a Letter addreſſed to their common friend Tickell. For the ſecret hiſtory of the following lines, if they contain any, it is now vain to ſeek:

In joy once join'd, in ſorrow, now, for years—
Partner in grief, and brother of my tears,
Tickell, accept this verſe, thy mournful due.

In 1719 appeared a *Paraphraſe on Part of the Book of Job.* Parker, to whom it is dedicated, had not long, by means of the ſeals, been qualified for a patron. Of this work the author's opinion may be gathered from his Letter to Curll: "You ſeem, in the Col-"lection you propoſe, to have omitted what "I think may claim the firſt place in it; "I mean *a Tranſlation from Part of Job,* "printed by Mr. Tonſon." The Dedication, which was only ſuffered to appear in Tonſon's edition, while it ſpeaks of his preſent retirement, ſeems to make an unuſual ſtruggle to eſcape from retirement. It is addreſſed, in no common ſtrain of flattery, to a Lord Chancellor, of whom he clearly appears to have had no kind of knowledge.

Of

Of his Satires it would not have been difficult to fix the dates without the aſſiſtance of firſt editions, which, as you had occaſion to obſerve in the Life of Dryden, are with difficulty found. We muſt then have referred to the Poems, to find when they were written. For theſe internal notes of time we ſhould not have referred in vain. The firſt Satire laments that "Guilt's chief foe in Addiſon is fled;" and the ſecond, addreſſing himſelf, aſks,

> Is thy ambition ſweating for a rhyme,
> Thou unambitious fool, at this late time?
> A fool at *forty* is a fool indeed.

The Satires were originally publiſhed ſeparately in folio, and theſe paſſages fix the appearance of the firſt to about 1725, the time at which it came out. As Young ſeldom ſuffered his pen to dry, after he had once dipped it in poetry, we may conclude that he began his Satires ſoon after he had written the *Paraphraſe on Job*. The laſt was certainly finiſhed in the beginning of the year 1726; for in December 1725 the King, in his paſſage from Helvoetſluys, eſcaped with great

great difficulty from a ſtorm by landing at Rye; and the concluſion of the Satire turns the eſcape into a miracle, in ſuch an encomiaſtick ſtrain of compliment as poetry too often ſeeks to pay to royalty. From the ſixth of theſe poems we learn,

> Midſt empire's charms, how Carolina's heart
> Glow'd with the love of virtue and of art:

ſince the grateful poet tells us in the next couplet,

> Her favour is diffus'd to that degree,
> Exceſs of goodneſs! it has dawn'd on me.

Of the nature of this favour we muſt now reſt contented in ignorance. The fifth Satire, *on Women*, was not publiſhed till 1727; and the ſixth not till 1728.

To theſe Poems, when he gathered them into one publication under the title of *The Univerſal Paſſion*, he prefixed a Preface, in which he obſerves, that "no man can converſe much in the world but, at what he "meets with, he muſt either be inſenſible or "grieve, or be angry or ſmile. Now to "ſmile at it, and turn it into ridicule," adds he,

he, " I think moſt eligible, as it hurts our-
" ſelves leaſt, and gives vice and folly the
" greateſt offence.—Laughing at the miſcon-
" duct of the world, will, in a great mea-
" ſure, eaſe us of any more diſagreeable paſ-
" ſion about it. One paſſion is more effec-
" tually driven out by another than by rea-
" ſon, whatever ſome teach." So wrote, and ſo of courſe thought the lively and witty Satiriſt at the grave age of almoſt fifty, who, many years earlier in life, wrote the *Laſt Day*. After all, Swift pronounced of theſe Satires, that they ſhould either have been more angry, or more merry. Is it not ſomewhat ſingular that Young preſerved, without any palliation, this Preface, ſo bluntly deciſive in favour of laughing at the world, in the ſame collection of his works which contains the mournful, angry, gloomy *Night Thoughts?*

At the concluſion of the Preface he applies Plato's beautiful fable of the *Birth of Love* to modern poetry, with the addition, " that
" Poetry, like Love, is a little ſubject to
" blindneſs, which makes her miſtake her
" way to preferments and honours; and

" that ſhe retains a dutiful admiration " of her father's family; but divides her " favours, and generally lives with her " mother's relations." Poetry, it is true, did not lead Young to preferments or to honours; but was there not ſomething like blindneſs ſometimes in the flattery which he forced her, and her ſiſter Proſe, to utter? He always, indeed, made her entertain a moſt dutiful admiration of riches; but ſurely Young, though nearly related to Poetry, had no connexion with her whom Plato makes the mother of Love. The frequent bounties his gratitude records, and the fortune he left behind him, clearly ſhow that he could not complain of being related to Poverty. By *The Univerſal Paſſion* he acquired no vulgar fortune, more than three thouſand pounds. A ſum not much leſs had already been ſwallowed up in the South-Sea. For this loſs he took the vengeance of an author. His Muſe makes poetical uſe more than once of a *South-Sea* Dream.

It is related by Mr. Spence, in his Manuſcript Anecdotes, on the authority of Mr. *Rawlinſon*, that Young, upon the publication

tion of his *Univerſal Paſſion*, received from the Duke of Grafton two thouſand pounds; and that, when one of his friends exclaimed, *Two thouſand pounds for a poem!* he ſaid it was the beſt bargain he ever made in his life, for the poem was worth four thouſand.

This ſtory may be true; but it ſeems to have been raiſed from the two anſwers of Lord Burghley and Sir Philip Sidney in Spenſer's Life.

When Young was writing a tragedy, Grafton is ſaid to have ſent him a human ſkull, with a candle in it, as a proper lamp *.

After inſcribing his Satires, not in the hope of not finding preferments and honours, to the Duke of Dorſet, Mr. Dodington, Mr. Spencer Compton, Lady Elizabeth Germain, and Sir Robert Walpole, he returns to plain panegyric. In 1726 he addreſſed a poem to Sir Robert Walpole, of which the title, *The Inſtalment*, ſufficiently explains the intention. If Young was a ready celebrator, he did not

* Spence.

endeavour, or did not chooſe, to be a laſting one. *The Inſtalment* is among the pieces he did not admit into the number of his *excuſeable writings*. Yet it contains a couplet which pretends to pant after the power of beſtowing immortality:

Oh how I long, enkindled by the theme,
In deep Eternity to launch thy name!

The bounty of the former reign ſeems to have been continued, poſſibly increaſed, in this. Whatever it was, the poet thought he deſerved it;—for he was not aſhamed to acknowledge what, without his acknowledgement, would now perhaps never have been known:

My breaſt, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire.
The ſtreams of royal bounty, turn'd by thee,
Refreſh the dry domains of poeſy.

If the purity of modern patriotiſm term Young a penſioner, it muſt at leaſt be confeſſed he was a grateful one.

The reign of the new monarch was uſhered in by Young with *Ocean, an Ode.* The hint of it was taken from the royal ſpeech,

which recommended the increaſe and encouragement of the ſeamen; that they might be *invited, rather than compelled by force and violence, to enter into the ſervice of their country*;—a plan which humanity muſt lament that policy has not even yet been able, or willing, to carry into execution. Prefixed to the original publication were an *Ode to the King*, *Pater Patriæ*, and an *Eſſay on Lyrick Poetry*. It is but juſtice to confeſs, that he preſerved neither of them; and that the ode itſelf, which in the firſt edition, and in the laſt, conſiſts of ſeventy-three ſtanzas, in the author's own edition is reduced to forty-nine. Among the omitted paſſages is *a Wiſh*, that concluded the poem, which few would have ſuſpected Young of forming, and of which few, after having formed it, would confeſs their ſhame by ſuppreſſion.

It is whimſical that he, who was ſoon to bid adieu to rhyme, ſhould fix upon a meaſure in which rhyme abounds even to ſatiety. Of this he ſaid, in his *Eſſay on Lyrick Poetry*, prefixed to the Poem, "For the more *harmony* likewiſe I choſe the frequent return

"of rhyme, which laid me under great difficulties. But difficulties, overcome, give grace and pleaſure. Nor can I account for the *pleaſure of rhyme in general* (of which the moderns are too fond) but from this truth." But the moderns ſurely deſerve not much cenſure for their fondneſs of what, by his own confeſſion, affords pleaſure, and abounds in harmony.

About this time he entered into Orders; and in April 1728, ſoon after he put on the gown, he was appointed chaplain to George the Second.

The tragedy of *The Brothers*, which was already in rehearſal, he immediately withdrew from the ſtage. The managers reſigned it with ſome reluctance to the delicacy of the new clergyman. The Epilogue to *The Brothers*, the only appendage to any of his three plays which he added himſelf, is, I believe, the only one of the kind. He calls it an *hiſtorical* Epilogue. Finding that *Guilt's dreadful cloſe his narrow ſcene denied*, he, in a manner, continues the tragedy in the Epilogue,

logue, and relates how Rome revenged the ſhade of Demetrius, and puniſhed Perſeus *for this night's deed.*

Of this change of profeſſion ſomething is told by the biographer of Pope, which places the eaſineſs and ſimplicity of Young in a ſingular light. When he determined on Orders, he did not addreſs himſelf to Sherlock, to Atterbury, or to Hare, for the beſt inſtructions in Theology, but to Pope; who, in a youthful frolick, adviſed the diligent peruſal of *Thomas Aquinas*. With this treaſure Young retired from interruption to an obſcure place in the ſuburbs. His poetical guide to godlineſs hearing nothing of him during half a year, and apprehending he might have carried the jeſt too far, ſought after him, and found him juſt in time to prevent what Ruffhead calls *an irretrievable derangement*.

That attachment to his favourite ſtudy which made him think a poet the ſureſt guide in his new profeſſion, left him little doubt whether poetry was the ſureſt path to its honours and preferments. Not long indeed after he took Orders, he publiſhed in

proſe, *A true Eſtimate of Human Life*, dedicated, notwithſtanding the Latin quotations with which it abounds, to the Queen; and a ſermon preached before the Houſe of Commons, 1729, on the martyrdom of King Charles, intituled *An Apology for Princes, or the Reverence due to Government*. But his old friends the Muſes were not forgotten. In 1730 he ſent into the world *Imperium Pelagi; a Naval Lyric, written in Imitation of Pindar's Spirit, occaſioned by His Majeſty's Return from Hanover, September* 1729, *and the ſucceeding Peace*. It is inſcribed to the Duke of Chandos. In the Preface we are told, that the Ode is the moſt ſpirited kind of Poetry, and that the Pindaric is the moſt ſpirited kind of Ode. "This I ſpeak," he adds, "at my own very great peril. But truth "has an eternal title to our confeſſion, "though we are ſure to ſuffer by it." Let it not be forgotten that this was one of his pieces which the author of the *Night Thoughts* deliberately refuſed to own.

Not long after this Pindaric attempt, he publiſhed two Epiſtles to Pope, *concerning the Authors of the Age*, 1730. Of theſe poems

poems one occaſion ſeems to have been an apprehenſion leſt, from the livelineſs of his ſatires, he ſhould not be deemed ſufficiently ſerious for promotion in the Church.

In July 1730 he was preſented by his College to the rectory of Welwyn in Hertfordſhire. In April 1732 he married Lady Elizabeth Lee, daughter of the Earl of Litchfield, and widow of Colonel Lee. His connexion with this Lady aroſe from his father's acquaintance, already mentioned, with Lady Ann Wharton, who was coheireſs of Sir Henry Lee of Ditchley in Oxfordſhire.

We may naturally conclude that he now gave himſelf up in ſome meaſure to the comforts of his new connexion, and to the expectations of that preferment which he thought due to his poetical talents, or, at leaſt, to the manner in which they had ſo frequently been exerted.

The next production of his Muſe was *The Sea-piece*, in two odes.

Young enjoys the credit of what is called an *Extempore Epigram* on Voltaire; who,

when he was in England, ridiculed, in the company of the jealous Engliſh poet; Milton's allegory of *Sin and Death*—

You are ſo witty, profligate and thin,
At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin.

From a paſſage in the poetical Dedication of his *Sea-piece* to Voltaire, it ſeems that his extemporaneous reproof (if it muſt be extemporaneous), for what few will now affirm Voltaire to have deſerved any reproof, was ſomething longer than a diſtich, and ſomething more gentle than this diſtich.

No ſtranger, Sir, though born in foreign climes,
On *Dorſet* downs, when Milton's page,
With Sin and Death provok'd thy rage,
Thy rage provok'd, who ſooth'd with *gentle* rhymes?

By *Dorſet downs* he probably meant Mr. Dodington's ſeat. In Pitt's Poems is *An Epiſtle to Dr. Edward Young, at Eaſtbury in Dorſetſhire, on the Review at Sarum*, 1722.

While with your Dodington retir'd you ſit,
Charm'd with his flowing Burgundy and wit, &c.

In

In 1734 he publiſhed *The foreign Addreſs, occaſioned by the Britiſh Fleet and the Poſture of Affairs. Written in the Character of a Sailor.* This Ode conſiſted of forty-five ſtanzas. It is not to be found in the author's four volumes, and the editors of the two ſubſequent volumes have, for once, followed the deciſion of the author. Of all the pieces which Young condemned as inexcuſeable, this alone has eſcaped that poſthumous inſertion, which, in truth, it little merited. He now appears to have given up all hopes of overtaking Pindar, and perhaps to have thought of turning his ambition to ſome original ſpecies of poetry. This poem concludes with a formal farewell to Ode:

My ſhell which Clio gave, which *Kings* applaud,
Which Europe's bleeding genius call'd abroad,
Adieu!

In a ſpecies of poetry altogether his own he next tried his ſkill, and ſucceeded.

Of his wife he was deprived in 1740. She was ſoon followed by an amiable daughter, the child of her former huſband, who was

juſt married to Mr. Temple, ſon of Lord Palmerſton. Mr. Temple did not long remain after his wife*. How ſuddenly their deaths happened, and how nearly together, none who has read the *Night Thoughts* (and who has not read them?) needs to be informed.

Inſatiate Archer! could not one ſuffice?
Thy ſhaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was ſlain;
And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

To the ſorrow Young felt at his loſſes we are indebted for theſe poems. There is a pleaſure ſure in ſadneſs which mourners only know. Of theſe poems the three or four firſt have been peruſed perhaps more eagerly, and more frequently, than the latter. When he got as far as the fourth or fifth, his grief was naturally either diminiſhed or exhauſted. We find the ſame religion, the ſame piety; but we hear leſs of Philander and of Narciſſa.

* The Iriſh Peerage, if authentic, in the account of Lord Palmerſton's family, ſomewhat confuſes this buſineſs; but I take what I have related to be the fact.

Mrs.

Mrs. Temple died *in her bridal hour* at Nice. He, with the reſt of her family, accompanied her to the continent.

> He flew, he ſnatch'd her from the rigid North,
> And bore her nearer to the ſun.

The poet ſeems to dwell with more melancholy on the deaths of Philander and Narciſſa, than of his wife. He who runs and reads may remember, that in the *Night Thoughts* Philander and Narciſſa are often mentioned, and often lamented. To recollect lamentations over the author's wife, the memory muſt have been charged with diſtinct paſſages. This Lady brought him one child, Frederick, now living.

That domeſtick grief is, in the firſt inſtance, to be thanked for theſe ornaments to our language it is impoſſible to deny. Nor would it be common hardineſs to contend, that worldly diſcontent had no hand in theſe joint productions of poetry and piety. Yet am I by no means ſure that, at any rate, we ſhould not have had ſomething of the ſame colour from Young's pencil, notwithſtanding

ſtanding the livelineſs of his ſatires. In ſo long a life, cauſes for diſcontent and occaſions for grief muſt have occurred. It is not clear to me that his Muſe was not ſitting upon the watch for the firſt which happened. *Night Thoughts* were not uncommon to her, even when firſt ſhe viſited the poet, and at a time when he himſelf was remarkable neither for gravity nor gloomineſs. In his *Laſt Day*, almoſt his earlieſt poem, he calls her the *melancholy Maid*,

—whom diſmal ſcenes delight,
Frequent at tombs and in the realms of Night.

And in the prayer which concludes the ſecond book of the ſame poem—

—Oh! permit the gloom of ſolemn night
To ſacred thought may forcibly invite.
Oh! how divine to tread the milky way,
To the bright palace of Eternal Day!

Still, is it altogether fair to dreſs up the poet for the man, and to bring the gloominеſs of the *Night Thoughts* to prove the gloomineſs of Young, and to ſhew that his genius, like the genius of Swift, was in ſome meaſure the ſullen inſpiration of diſcontent?

Whether

Whether you think with me, I know not; but the famous *De mortuis nil niſi bonum* has always ſtricken me as favouring more of female weakneſs than of manly reaſon. Cenſure is not heard beneath the tomb any more than praiſe. *De mortuis nil niſi verum—De vivis nil niſi bonum*—would approach much nearer to good ſenſe. After all, the few hand-fulls of remaining duſt which once compoſed the body of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, feel not much concern whether Young paſſes now for a man of ſorrow, or for a *fellow of infinite jeſt*. To this favour muſt come the whole family of Yorick.—His immortal part, wherever that now dwells, is ſtill leſs ſolicitous on this head. But to a ſon of worth and ſenſibility it is of ſome little conſequence whether contemporaries believe, and poſterity be taught to believe, that his debauched and reprobate life, caſt a Stygian gloom over the evening of his father's days, ſaved him the trouble of feigning a character completely deteſtable, and ſucceeded at laſt in bringing his *grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave*.

The

The humanity of the world, little ſatisfied with inventing perhaps a melancholy diſpoſition for the father, proceeds next to invent an argument in ſupport of their invention, and chooſes that Lorenzo ſhould be Young's own ſon. The Biographia pretty roundly aſſerts this to be the fact; of the abſolute impoſſibility of which the Biographia itſelf, in particular dates, contains undeniable evidence. Readers I know there are of a ſtrange turn of mind, who will hereafter peruſe the *Night Thoughts* with leſs ſatisfaction; who will wiſh they had ſtill been deceived; who will quarrel with me for diſcovering that no ſuch character as Lorenzo ever yet diſgraced human nature, or broke a father's heart. Yet would theſe admirers of the ſublime and terrible be offended, ſhould you ſet them down for cruel and for ſavage.

Of this report, inhuman to the ſurviving ſon, if it be untrue, in proportion as the character of Lorenzo is diabolical, where are we to find the proofs? Perhaps it is clear from the performance itſelf. From the firſt line to the laſt of the *Night Thoughts*, no one

expreſſion

expreſſion can be diſcovered which betrays any thing like the father. In the ſecond *Night* I find an expreſſion which betrays ſomething elſe; that Lorenzo was his friend; one, it is poſſible, of his former companions; one of the Duke of Wharton's ſett. The Poet ſtyles him *gay Friend*—an appellation not very natural from a pious incenſed father to ſuch a being as he paints Lorenzo, and that being his ſon.

But let us ſee how he has ſketched this dreadful portrait, from the ſight of ſome of whoſe features the artiſt himſelf muſt have turned away with horror!—A ſubject more ſhocking, if his only child really ſat to him, than the crucifixion of Michael Angelo; upon the horrid ſtory told of which, Young compoſed a ſhort Poem of fourteen lines in the early part of life, which he did not think deſerved to be republiſhed.

In the firſt *Night*; the addreſs to the Poet's ſuppoſed ſon is,

Lorenzo, Fortune makes her court to thee;

In

In the fifth *Night*—

And burns Lorenzo ſtill for the ſublime
Of life? To hang his airy neſt on high?

Is this a picture of the ſon of the rector of Welwyn?

Eighth *Night*—

In foreign realms (for thou haſt travell'd far)—

which even now does not apply to his ſon.

In *Night* five—

So wept Lorenzo fair Clariſſa's fate,
Who gave that angel-boy on whom he dotes,
And died to give him, orphan'd in his birth!

At the beginning of the fifth *Night* we find—

Lorenzo! to recriminate is juſt.
I grant the man is vain who writes for praiſe.

But, to cut ſhort all enquiry, if any one of theſe paſſages, if any paſſage in the poems, be applicable, my friend ſhall paſs for Lorenzo. The ſon of the author of the *Night Thoughts*

Thoughts was not old enough, when the *Night Thoughts* were written, to recriminate, or to be a father. The *Night Thoughts* were begun immediately after the mournful events of 1740. The firſt *Nights* appear in the Stationers' books as the property of Robert Dodſley, in 1742. The Preface to *Night* Seven is dated July the 7th, 1744. The marriage, in conſequence of which the ſuppoſed Lorenzo was born, happened in April 1732. Young's child was not born till June 1733. In 1740 this Lorenzo, this finiſhed infidel, this *father*, to whoſe education Vice had for ſome years put the laſt hand, was only *ſeven* years old. An anecdote of this cruel ſort, ſo open to contradiction, ſo impoſſible to be true, who could propagate? Thus eaſily are blaſted the reputations of the living and of the dead.

Who then was Lorenzo? exclaim the readers I have mentioned. If he was not his ſon, was he not his nephew, his couſin?

Theſe are queſtions which I do not pretend to anſwer. For the ſake of humah nature, I could wiſh Lorenzo to have been only

the creation of the Poet's fancy. That this was the caſe, many expreſſions in the *Night Thoughts* would ſeem to prove, did not a paſſage in *Night* Eight appear to ſhew that he had ſomebody in his eye for the groundwork at leaſt of the painting. Lovelace or Lorenzo may be feigned characters; but a writer does not feign a name of which he only gives the initial letter:

> Tell not Caliſta. She will laugh thee dead,
> Or ſend thee to her hermitage with L—.

The Biographia, not ſatisfied with pointing out the ſon of Young, in that ſon's lifetime, as his father's Lorenzo, travels out of its way into the hiſtory of the ſon, and tells of his having been forbidden his college at Oxford for miſbehaviour, and of his long labouring under the diſpleaſure of his father. How ſuch anecdotes, were they true, tend to illuſtrate the Life of Young, it is not eaſy to diſcover. If the ſon of the author of the *Night Thoughts* was indeed forbidden his college for a time, at one of our Univerſities, the author of *Paradiſe Loſt* was diſgracefully ejected from the other, with the additional indignity of publick corporal correction.

From

From juvenile follies who is free? Were Nature to indulge the ſon of Young with a ſecond youth, and to leave him at the ſame time the experience of that which is paſt, he would probably paſs it differently (who would not?); he would certainly be the occaſion of leſs uneaſineſs to his father;—but, from the ſame experience, he would as certainly be treated in a different manner by his father. Young was a poet; poets (with reverence be it ſpoken) do not make the beſt parents. Fancy and imagination ſeldom deign to ſtoop from their heights; always ſtoop unwillingly to the low level of common duties. Aloof from vulgar life, they purſue their rapid flight beyond the ken of mortals, and deſcend not to earth but when obliged by neceſſity. The proſe of ordinary occurrences is beneath the dignity of poetry.

Yet the ſon of Young would almoſt ſooner, I know, paſs for a Lorenzo, than ſee himſelf vindicated, at the expence of his father's memory, from follies which, if it was blameable in a boy to have committed them, it is ſurely praiſe-worthy in a man to lament,

and certainly not only unneceſſary but cruel in a biographer to record.

Of Edward Young an anecdote which wanders among readers is not true, that he was Fielding's *Parſon Adams*. The original of that famous painting was William Young. He too was a clergyman. He ſupported an uncomfortable exiſtence by tranſlating for the bookſellers from Greek; and, if he was not his own friend, was at leaſt no man's enemy. Yet the facility with which this report has gained belief in the world, argues (were it not ſufficiently known) that the author of the *Night Thoughts* bore ſome reſemblance to *Adams*.

Of the *Night Thoughts*, notwithſtanding their author's profeſſed retirement, all are inſcribed to great or to growing names. He had not yet weaned himſelf from Earls and Dukes, from Speakers of the Houſe of Commons, Lords Commiſſioners of the Treaſury, and Chancellors of the Exchequer. In *Night* Eight the politician plainly betrays himſelf—

Think

Think no poſt needful that demands a knave.
When late our civil helm was ſhifting hands,
So P— thought: think better if you can.

Yet it muſt be confeſſed, that at the concluſion of *Night* Nine, weary perhaps of courting earthly patrons, he tells his ſoul,

Henceforth
Thy *patron* he, whoſe diadem has dropt
Yon gems of heaven; Eternity thy prize;
And leave the racers of the world their own.

The Fourth *Night* was addreſſed by "a "much-indebted Muſe" to the Honourable Mr. Yorke, now Lord Hardwicke; who meant to have laid the Muſe under ſtill greater obligations, by the living of Shenfield in Eſſex, if it had become vacant.

The Firſt *Night* concludes with this paſſage—

Dark, though not blind, like thee, Meonides;
Or Milton, thee. Ah! could I reach your ſtrain;
Or his who made Meonides our own!
Man too he ſung. Immortal man I ſing.
Oh had he preſt his theme, purſued the track

Which opens out of darkneſs into day!
Oh had he mounted on his wing of fire,
Soar'd, where I ſink, and ſung immortal man—
How had it bleſt mankind, and reſcued me!

To the author of theſe lines Dr. Warton choſe, in 1756, to dedicate his *Eſſay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, which attempted (whether juſtly or not) to pluck from Pope his *Wing of Fire*, and to reduce him to a rank at leaſt one degree lower than the claſs of Engliſh poets. Though the firſt edition of this Eſſay was, for particular reaſons, ſuppreſſed; another was printed. The Dedication ſtill remained. To ſuppoſe therefore that Young approved of Warton's opinion of Pope is not unnatural. Yet the author of the paſſage juſt quoted would ſcarcely countenance, by patronage, ſuch an attack upon the fame of him whom he invokes as his Muſe. Part of Pope's Third Book of the *Odyſſey*, depoſited in the Muſeum, is written upon the back of a Letter ſigned *E. Young*, which is clearly the hand-writing of our Young. The Letter, dated only May the 2d, ſeems obſcure; but there can be little doubt that the friendſhip he requeſts was a literary

literary one *, and that he had the higheſt literary opinion of Pope.

" Dear Sir, May the 2d.

" Having been often from home, I know " not if you have done me the favour of " calling on me. But, be that as it will, I " much want that inſtance of your friend- " ſhip I mentioned in my laſt; a friendſhip " I am very ſenſible I can receive from no " one but yourſelf. I ſhould not urge this " thing ſo much but for very particular rea- " ſons; nor can you be at a loſs to conceive " how a *trifle of this nature* may be of ſerious " moment to me; and while I am in hopes " of the great advantage of your advice " about it, I ſhall not be ſo abſurd as to " make any further ſtep without it. I know " you are much engaged, and only hope to " hear of you at your entire leiſure.

" I am, Sir,

" Your moſt faithful,

" and obedient Servant,

" E. YOUNG."

Nay, even after Pope's death, he ſays, in *Night* Seven:

* I am told it was a Prologue to one of his Tragedies.

Pope, who could'ſt make immortals, art thou dead?

Either Warton, then, dedicated his book to a patron who diſapproved its doctrine; or Young, in his old age, bartered for a dedication an opinion entertained of his friend through all that part of life when he could beſt form opinions.

From this account of Young, two or three ſhort paſſages, which ſtand almoſt together in *Night* Four, ſhould not be excluded. They afford a picture, by his own hand; from the ſtudy of which my readers may chooſe to form their own opinion of the features of his mind, and the complexion of his life.

Ah me! the dire effect
Of loitering here, of death defrauded long;
Of old ſo gracious (and let that ſuffice),
My very maſter knows me not.

I've been ſo long remember'd, I'm forgot.

When in his courtier's ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the Nectar of the Great;
And ſqueeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.

Twice-

*

Twice-told the period ſpent on ſtubborn Troy,
Court-favour, yet untaken, I beſiege.

*

If this ſong lives, Poſterity ſhall know,
One, though in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
Who thought ev'n gold might come a day too late;
Nor on his ſubtle death-bed plann'd his ſcheme
For future vacancies in church or ſtate.

By theſe extraordinary Poems, written after he was ſixty, of which I have been led to ſay ſo much, I hope, by the wiſh of doing juſtice to the living and the dead, it was the deſire of Young to be principally known. He entitled the four volumes which he publiſhed himſelf, *The Works of the Author of the Night Thoughts*. While it is remembered that from theſe he excluded many of his writings, let it not be forgotten that the rejected pieces contained nothing prejudicial to the cauſe of virtue, or of religion. Were every thing that Young ever wrote to be publiſhed, he would only appear perhaps in a leſs reſpectable light as a poet, and more deſpicable as a dedicator: he would not paſs for a worſe chriſtian, or for a worſe man.—

His

His dedications, after all, he had no right to ſuppreſs. They all, I believe, ſpeak, not a little to the credit of his gratitude, of favours received; and I know not whether the author, who has once ſolemnly printed an acknowledgement of a favour, ſhould not always print it.

Is it to the credit or to the diſcredit of Young, as a poet, that of his *Night Thoughts* the *French* are particularly fond?

Of the *Epitaph on Lord Aubrey Beauclerk*, dated 1740, all I know is, that I find it in the late body of Engliſh Poetry, and that I am ſorry to find it there.

Notwithſtanding the farewell which he ſeemed to have taken in the *Night Thoughts* of every thing which bore the leaſt reſemblance to ambition, he dipped again in politics. In 1745 he wrote *Reflections on the publick Situation of the Kingdom, addreſſed to the Duke of Newcaſtle*—ndignant, as it appears, to behold

—a pope-

—a pope-bred Princeling crawl aſhore,
And whiſtle cut-throats, with thoſe ſwords that ſcrap'd
Their barren rocks for wretched ſuſtenance,
To cut his paſſage to the Britiſh throne.

This political poem might be called a *Night Thought*. Indeed it was originally printed as the concluſion of the *Night Thoughts*, though he did not gather it with his other works.

Prefixed to the ſecond edition of Howe's *Devout Meditations* is a Letter from Young, dated January 19, 1752, addreſſed to Archibald Macaulay, Eſq; thanking him for the book, which he ſays "he ſhall never lay far "out of his reach; for a greater demonſtra- "tion of a ſound head and a ſincere heart he "never ſaw."

In 1753, when *The Brothers* had lain by him above thirty years, it appeared upon the ſtage. If any part of his fortune had been acquired by ſervility of adulation, he now determined to deduct from it no inconſiderable ſum, as a gift to the Society for the Propagation of the Goſpel. To this ſum he hoped the

the profits of *The Brothers* would amount. In his calculation he was deceived; but the Society were not loſers by the bad ſucceſs of the play. The author made up the ſum he intended, which was a thouſand pounds, from his own pocket.

The next performance which he printed was a proſe publication, entitled, *The Centaur not fabulous, in ſix Letters to a Friend on the Life in Vogue.* The Concluſion is dated November 29, 1754. In the third Letter is deſcribed the death-bed of the *gay, young, noble, ingenious, accompliſhed, and moſt wretched Altamont.* His laſt words were—"My "principles have poiſoned my friend, my "extravagance has beggared my boy, my "unkindneſs has murdered my wife!" Either Altamont and Lorenzo were the ſame, or Young was unlucky enough to know two characters who bore no little reſemblance to each other in perfection of wickedneſs.

The Old Man's Relapſe, occaſioned by an Epiſtle to Walpole, if it was written by Young, which I much doubt, muſt have been written very late in life. It has been ſeen,

ſeen, I am told, in a Miſcellany publiſhed thirty years before his death.—In 1758, he exhibited *The Old Man's Relapſe* in more than words, by again becoming a dedicator, and publiſhing a ſermon addreſſed to the King.

The Letter in proſe on *Original Compoſition*, addreſſed to Richardſon the author of *Clariſſa*, appeared in 1759. He, who employed his pious pen for almoſt the laſt time in doing juſtice to the exemplary death-bed of Addiſon, might probably, at the cloſe of his own life, afford no unuſeful leſſons for the deaths of others.

The few lines which ſtand in the laſt edition, as *ſent by Lord Melcombe to Dr. Young, not long before his Lordſhip's Death*, were indeed ſo ſent, but were only an introduction to what was there meant by *The Muſe's lateſt Spark*. The poem is neceſſary, whatever may be its merit, ſince the Preface to it is already printed. Lord Melcombe called his *Tuſculum La Trappe*.

"Love

" Love thy country, wiſh it well,
Not with too intenſe a care,
'Tis enough, that, when it fell,
Thou its ruin didſt not ſhare.

Envy's cenſure, Flattery's praiſe,
With unmov'd indifference view;
Learn to tread Life's dangerous maze,
With unerring Virtue's clue.

Void of ſtrong deſire and fear,
Life's wide ocean truſt no more;
Strive thy little bark to ſteer
With the tide, but near the ſhore.

Thus prepar'd, thy ſhorten'd ſail
Shall, whene'er the winds increaſe,
Seizing each propitious gale,
Waft thee to the Port of Peace.

Keep thy conſcience from offence,
And tempeſtuous paſſions free,
So, when thou art call'd from hence,
Eaſy ſhall thy paſſage be;

Eaſy ſhall thy paſſage be,
Chearful thy allotted day,
Short the account 'twix God and thee;
Hope ſhall meet thee on the way;

Truth

Truth ſhall lead thee to the gate,
Mercy's ſelf ſhall let thee in,
Where its never-changing ſtate
Full perfection ſhall begin."

The Poem was accompanied by a Letter.

"*La Trappe*, the 27th Oct. 1761.

"Dear Sir,

"You ſeemed to like the ode I ſent you "for your amuſement; I now ſend it you "as a preſent. If you pleaſe to accept of "it, and are willing that our friendſhip "ſhould be known when we are gone, you "will be pleaſed to leave this among thoſe "of your own papers that may poſſibly ſee "the light by a poſthumous publication. "God ſend us health while we ſtay, and an "eaſy journey!

"My dear Dr. Young,

"Yours, moſt cordially,

"MELCOMBE."

In 1762, a ſhort time before his death, Young publiſhed *Reſignation*. Notwithſtanding the manner in which it was forced from him by the world, criticiſm has treated it with

with no common ſeverity. If it ſhall be thought not to deſerve the higheſt praiſe, on the other ſide of fourſcore by whom, except by Newton and by Waller, has praiſe been merited? To *Reſignation* was prefixed an Apology for its appearance: to which more credit is due than to the generality of ſuch apologies, from Young's unuſual anxiety that no more productions of his old age ſhould diſgrace his former fame. In his will, dated February 1760, he deſires of his executors, *in a particular manner*, that all his manuſcript books and writings whatever might be burned, except his book of accounts.

In September 1764 he added a kind of codicil, wherein he made it his dying intreaty to his houſekeeper, to whom he left 1000*l.* "that all his manuſcripts might be deſtroy-
" ed as ſoon as he was dead, which would
" greatly oblige her deceaſed *friend*."

It may teach mankind the uncertainty of worldly friendſhips, to know that Young, either by ſurviving thoſe he loved, or by outliving their affections, could only recollect the names of two friends, this poor woman and

and a hatter, to mention in his will; and it may ſerve to repreſs that teſtamentary pride, which too often ſeeks for ſounding names and titles, to be informed that the author of the *Night Thoughts* did not bluſh to leave a legacy to his "friend Henry Stevens, a hat-"ter at the Temple-gate." Of theſe two remaining friends, one went before Young. But, at eighty-four, "where," as he ſays in *The Centaur*, "is that world into which we "were born?"

The ſame humility which marked a houſekeeper and a hatter for the friends of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, had before beſtowed the ſame title on his footman, in an epitaph in his *Church-yard* upon James Barker, dated 1749, which I am glad to find in the late collection of his works.

Young and his houſekeeper were ridiculed, with more ill-nature than wit, in a kind of novel publiſhed by Kidgell in 1755, called *The Card*, under the names of Dr. Elwes and Mrs. Fuſby. Kidgell had been Young's curate.

In April 1765, at an age to which few attain, a period was put to the life of Young. Much is told in the *Biographia*, which I know not to have been true, of the manner of his burial—of the maſter and children of a charity-ſchool, which he founded in his pariſh, who neglected to attend their benefactor's corpſe; and of a bell which was not cauſed to toll ſo often as bells uſually toll. Had that humanity, which is here laviſhed upon things of little conſequence either to the living or to the dead, been ſhewn in its proper place to the living, I ſhould have had leſs to ſay about Lorenzo. They who lament that theſe misfortunes happened to Young, forget the praiſe he beſtows upon Socrates, in the Preface to *Night* Seven, for reſenting his friend's requeſt about his funeral.

After his death, Dodſley publiſhed a novel called *Eliza*, of which I have been told that Young was the author.

The curious reader of Young's Life will naturally inquire to what it was owing, that,

though he lived almoſt forty years after he took Orders, which included one whole reign uncommonly long, and part of another, he was never thought worthy of the leaſt preferment. The author of the *Night Thoughts* ended his days upon a Living which came to him from his College without any favour, and to which he probably had an eye when he determined on the Church. To ſatisfy curioſity of this kind is, at this diſtance of time, far from eaſy. The parties themſelves know not often, at the inſtant, why they are neglected. The neglect of Young is by ſome aſcribed to his having attached himſelf to the Prince of Wales, and to his having preached an offenſive ſermon at St. James's. It has been told me, that he had two hundred a year in the late reign, by the patronage of Walpole; and that, whenever the King was reminded of Young, the only anſwer was, *he has a penſion.* All the light thrown on this inquiry, by the following Letter from Secker, only ſerves to ſhew us at what a late period of life the author of the *Night Thoughts* ſolicited preferment.

" Deanry of St. Paul's, July 8, 1758.

" Good Dr. Young,

" I have long wondered, that more ſuit-
" able notice of your great merit hath not
" been taken by perſons in power. But
" how to remedy the omiſſion, I ſee not.
" No encouragement hath ever been given
" me to mention things of this nature to
" his Majeſty. And therefore, in all likeli-
" hood, the only conſequence of doing it
" would be weakening the little influence,
" which elſe I may poſſibly have on ſome
" other occaſions. Your fortune and your
" reputation ſet you above the need of ad-
" vancement; and your ſentiments, above
" that concern for it, on your own ac-
" count, which, on that of the Public, is
" ſincerely felt by

" Your loving Brother,
" THOS. CANT."

At laſt, at the age of fourſcore, he was appointed, in 1761, Clerk of the Cloſet to the Princeſs Dowager.

One obſtacle muſt have ſtood not a little in the way of that preferment after which his whole life panted. Though he took Orders he never intirely ſhook off Politics. He was always the Lion of his maſter Milton, *pawing to get free his hinder parts.* By this conduct, if he gained ſome friends, he made many enemies.

Beſides, in the latter part of life, Young was fond of holding himſelf out for a man retired from the world. The ſame line which contains *oblitus meorum*, contains alſo *obliviſcendus & illis.* The brittle chain of worldly friendſhip and patronage is broken as effectually, when one goes beyond the length of it, as when the other does. To the veſſel which is ſailing from the ſhore, it only appears that the ſhore alſo recedes; in life it is truly thus. He who retires from the world, will find himſelf, in reality, deſerted as faſt, if not faſter, by the world. The publick is not to be treated as the vain coxcomb treats his miſtreſs—to be threatened with deſertion, in order to increaſe fondneſs.

Young ſeems to have been taken at his word. Notwithſtanding his frequent complaints of being neglected, no hand was reached out to pull him from that retirement of which he declared himſelf enamoured. Alexander aſſigned no palace for the reſidence of Diogenes, who boaſted his ſurly ſatisfaction with his tub.

Of the domeſtick manners and petty habits of the author of the *Night Thoughts*, I hoped to have given you an account from the beſt authority;—but who ſhall dare to ſay, To-morrow I will be wiſe or virtuous, or to-morrow I will do a particular thing? Upon enquiring for his houſekeeper, I learned that ſhe was buried two days before I reached the town of her abode.

In a Letter from Tſcharner, a noble foreigner, to Count Haller, Tſcharner ſays, he has lately ſpent four days with Young at Welwyn, where the author taſtes all the eaſe and pleaſure mankind can deſire. "Every "thing about him ſhews the man, each in-"dividual being placed by rule. All is neat "without

" without art. He is very pleaſant in con-
" verſation, and extremely polite."

This, and more, may poſſibly be true: but Tſcharner's was a firſt viſit, a viſit of curioſity and admiration, and a viſit which the author expected.

The attention Young beſtowed upon the peruſal of books is not unworthy imitation. When any paſſage pleaſed him, he appears to have folded down the leaf. On theſe paſſages he beſtowed a ſecond reading. But the labours of man are too frequently vain. Before he returned, a ſecond time, to what he had once approved, he died. Many of his books, which I have ſeen, are by thoſe notes of approbation ſo ſwelled beyond their real bulk, that they will not ſhut.

What though we wade in wealth, or ſoar in fame!
Earth's higheſt ſtation ends in *Here he lies!*
And *duſt to duſt* concludes her nobleſt ſong!

The author of theſe lines is not without his *hic jacet*.

By the good ſenſe of his ſon, it contains none of that praiſe which no marble can make the bad or the fooliſh merit; which, without the direction of a ſtone or a turf, will find its way, ſooner or later, to the deſerving.

M. S.
Optimi parentis
EDWARDI YOUNG, LL. D.
Hujus eccleſiæ rect.
Et Elizabethæ
fæm. prænob.
Conjugis ejus amantiſſimæ
Pio & gratiſſimo animo
Hoc marmor poſuit
F. Y.
Filius ſuperſtes.

Such, my good friend, is the account I have been able to collect of Young. That it may be long before any thing like what I have juſt tranſcribed be neceſſary for you, is the ſincere wiſh of,

Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged Friend,

Lincoln's Inn, Sept. 1780.

HERBERT CROFT, Jun."

OF

OF Young's Poems it is difficult to give any general character; for he has no uniformity of manner: one of his pieces has no great reſemblance to another. He began to write early, and continued long; and at different times had different modes of poetical excellence in view. His numbers are ſometimes ſmooth, and ſometimes rugged; his ſtyle is ſometimes concatenated, and ſometimes abrupt; ſometimes diffuſive, and ſometimes conciſe. His plan ſeems to have ſtarted in his mind at the preſent moment, and his thoughts appear the effects of chance, ſometimes adverſe, and ſometimes lucky, with very little operation of judgement.

He was not one of the writers whom experience improves, and who obſerving their own faults become gradually correct. His Poem on the *Laſt Day*, his firſt great performance, has an equability and propriety, which he afterwards either never endeavoured or never attained. Many paragraphs are noble, and few are mean, yet the whole is languid; the plan is too much extended, and a ſucceſſion of images divides and weakens the

the general conception; but the great reaſon why the reader is diſappointed is, that the thought of the LAST DAY makes every man more than poetical, by ſpreading over his mind a general obſcurity of ſacred horror, that oppreſſes diſtinction, and diſdains expreſſion.

His ſtory of *Jane Grey* was never popular. It is written with elegance enough, but *Jane* is too heroick to be pitied.

The *Univerſal Paſſion* is indeed a very great performance. It is ſaid to be a ſeries of Epigrams; but if it be, it is what the author intended: his endeavour was at the production of ſtriking diſtichs and pointed ſentences; and his diſtichs have the weight of ſolid ſentiment, and his point the ſharpneſs of reſiſtleſs truth. His characters are often ſelected with diſcernment, and drawn with nicety; his illuſtrations are often happy, and his reflections often juſt. His ſpecies of ſatire is between thoſe of Horace and of Juvenal; he has the gaiety of Horace without his laxity of numbers, and the morality of Juvenal with greater variation of images.

He

He plays, indeed, only on the ſurface of life; he never penetrates the receſſes of the mind, and therefore the whole power of his poetry is exhauſted by a ſingle peruſal; his conceits pleaſe only when they ſurpriſe.

To tranſlate he never condeſcended, unleſs his *Paraphraſe on Job* may be conſidered as a verſion; in which he has not, I think, been unſucceſsful: he indeed favoured himſelf, by chuſing thoſe parts which moſt eaſily admit the ornaments of Engliſh poetry.

He had leaſt ſucceſs in his lyrick attempts, in which he ſeems to have been under ſome malignant influence: he is always labouring to be great, and at laſt is only turgid.

In his *Night Thoughts* he has exhibited a very wide diſplay of original poetry, variegated with deep reflections and ſtriking alluſions, a wilderneſs of thought, in which the fertility of fancy ſcatters flowers of every hue and of every odour. This is one of the few poems in which blank verſe could not be changed for rhyme but with diſadvantage. The wild diffuſion of the ſentiments, and the

the digreſſive ſallies of imagination, would have been compreſſed and reſtrained by regard to rhyme. The excellence of this work is not exactneſs, but copiouſneſs; particular lines are not to be regarded; the power is in the whole, and in the whole there is a magnificence like that aſcribed to Chineſe Plantation, the magnificence of vaſt extent and endleſs diverſity.

His laſt poem was the *Reſignation*; in which he made, as he was accuſtomed, an experiment of a new mode of writing, and ſucceeded better than in his *Ocean* or his *Merchant*. It was very falſely repreſented as a proof of decaying faculties. There is Young in every ſtanza, ſuch as he often was in his higheſt vigour.

His Tragedies not making part of the Collection, I had forgotten, till Mr. Steevens recalled them to my thoughts by remarking, that he ſeemed to have one favourite cataſtrophe, as his three Plays all concluded with laviſh ſuicide; a method by which, as Dryden remarked, a poet eaſily rids his ſcene of perſons whom he wants not to keep alive.

In

In *Buſiris* there are the greateſt ebullitions of imagination; but the pride of Buſiris is ſuch as no other man can have, and the whole is too remote from known life to raiſe either grief, terror, or indignation. The *Revenge* approaches much nearer to human practices and manners, and therefore keeps poſſeſſion of the ſtage: the firſt deſign ſeems ſuggeſted by *Othello*; but the reflections, the incidents, and the diction, are original. The moral obſervations are ſo introduced, and ſo expreſſed, as to have all the novelty that can be required. Of *The Brothers* I may be allowed to ſay nothing, ſince nothing was ever ſaid of it by the Publick.

It muſt be allowed of Young's poetry, that it abounds in thought, but without much accuracy or ſelection. When he lays hold of an illuſtration, he purſues it beyond expectation, ſometimes happily, as in his parallel of *Quickſilver* with *Pleaſure*, which I have heard repeated with approbation by a Lady, of whoſe praiſe he would have been juſtly proud, and which is very ingenious, very ſubtle, and almoſt exact; but ſometimes he is leſs lucky, as when, in his *Night Thoughts*,

Thoughts, having it dropped into his mind, that the orbs, floating in ſpace, might be called the *cluſter* of Creation, he thinks on a cluſter of grapes, and ſays, that they all hang on the great Vine, drinking the *nectareous juice of immortal Life.*

His conceits are ſometimes yet leſs valuable; in the *Laſt Day*, he hopes to illuſtrate the re-aſſembly of the atoms that compoſe the human body at the *Trump of Doom*, by the collection of bees into a ſwarm at the tinkling of a pan.

The Prophet ſays of Tyre, that *her Merchants are Princes*; Young ſays of Tyre in his *Merchant*,

Her merchants Princes, and each *deck a Throne.*

Let burleſque try to go beyond him.

He has the trick of joining the turgid and familiar: to buy the alliance of Britain, *Climes were paid down.* Antitheſis is his favourite. *They for kindneſs hate*; and *becauſe ſhe's right, ſhe's ever in the wrong.*

His

His verſification is his own, neither his blank nor his rhyming lines have any reſemblance to thoſe of former writers: he picks up no hemiſtichs, he copies no favourite expreſſions; he ſeems to have laid up no ſtores of thought or diction, but to owe all to the fortuitous ſuggeſtions of the preſent moment. Yet I have reaſon to believe that, when once he had formed a new deſign, he then laboured it with very patient induſtry, and that he compoſed with great labour, and frequent reviſions.

His verſes are formed by no certain model; for he is no more like himſelf in his different productions than he is like others. He ſeems never to have ſtudied proſody, nor to have had any direction but from his own ear. But, with all his defects, he was a man of genius and a poet.

MALLET.

MALLET.

MALLET.

OF DAVID MALLET, having no written memorial, I am able to give no other account than ſuch as is ſupplied by the unauthoriſed loquacity of common fame, and a very ſlight perſonal knowledge.

He was by his original one of the Macgregors, a clan that became, about ſixty years ago, under the conduct of Robin Roy, ſo formidable and ſo infamous for violence and robbery, that the name was annulled by a legal abolition; and when they were all to denominate themſelves anew, the father, I ſuppoſe, of this author called himſelf Malloch.

David Malloch was, by the penury of his parents, compelled to be *Janitor* of the High School at Edinburgh; a mean office, of which he did not afterwards delight to hear. But he ſurmounted the diſadvantages of his birth and fortune; for when the Duke of Montroſe applied to the College of Edinburgh for a tutor to educate his ſons, Malloch was recommended; and I never heard that he diſhonoured his credentials.

When his pupils were ſent to ſee the world, they were intruſted to his care; and having conducted them round the common circle of modiſh travels, he returned with them to London, where, by the influence of the family in which he reſided, he naturally gained admiſſion to many perſons of the higheſt rank, and the higheſt character, to wits, nobles, and ſtateſmen.

Of his works, I know not whether I can trace the ſeries. His firſt production was *William and Margaret* *; of which, though

* Mallet's *William and Margaret* was printed in Aaron Hill's *Plain Dealer*, N° 36, July 24, 1724. In its original ſtate it was very different from what it is in the laſt edition of his works.

it

it contains nothing very ſtriking or difficult, he has been envied the reputation; and plagiariſm has been boldly charged, but never proved.

Not long afterwards he publiſhed the *Excurſion* (1728); a deſultory and capricious view of ſuch ſcenes of Nature as his fancy led him, or his knowledge enabled him, to deſcribe. It is not devoid of poetical ſpirit. Many of the images are ſtriking, and many of the paragraphs are elegant. The caſt of diction ſeems to be copied from Thomſon, whoſe *Seaſons* were then in their full bloſſom of reputation. He has Thomſon's beauties and his faults.

His poem on *Verbal Criticiſm* (1733) was written to pay court to Pope, on a ſubject which he either did not underſtand or willingly miſrepreſented; and is little more than an improvement, or rather expanſion, of a fragment which Pope printed in a Miſcellany long before he engrafted it into a regular poem. There is in this piece more pertneſs than wit, and more confidence than

knowledge. The verification is tolerable, nor can criticiſm allow it a higher praiſe.

His firſt tragedy was *Eurydice*, acted at Drury-Lane in 1731; of which I know not the reception nor the merit, but have heard it mentioned as a mean performance. He was not then too high to accept a Prologue and Epilogue from Aaron Hill, neither of which can be much commended.

Having cleared his tongue from his native pronunciation ſo as to be no longer diſtinguiſhed as a Scot, he ſeems inclined to diſencumber himſelf from all adherences of his original, and took upon him to change his name from Scotch *Malloch* to Engliſh *Mallet*, without any imaginable reaſon of preference which the eye or ear can diſcover. What other proofs he gave of diſreſpect to his native country I know not; but it was remarked of him, that he was the only Scot whom Scotchmen did not commend.

About this time Pope, whom he viſited familiarly, publiſhed his *Eſſay on Man*, but concealed the author; and when Mallet entered

tered one day, Pope aſked him ſlightly what there was new. Mallet told him, that the neweſt piece was ſomething called an *Eſſay on Man*, which he had inſpected idly; and ſeeing the utter inability of the author, who had neither ſkill in writing nor knowledge of his ſubject, had toſſed it away. Pope, to puniſh his ſelf-conceit, told him the ſecret.

A new edition of the works of Bacon being prepared (1740) for the preſs, Mallet was employed to prefix a Life, which he has written with elegance, perhaps with ſome affectation; but with ſo much more knowledge of hiſtory than of ſcience, that when he afterwards undertook the Life of Marlborough, Warburton remarked, that he might perhaps forget that Marlborough was a general, as he had forgotten that Bacon was a philoſopher.

When the Prince of Wales was driven from the palace, and, ſetting himſelf at the head of the oppoſition, kept a ſeparate Court, he endeavoured to increaſe his popularity by the patronage of literature, and made Mallet his under-ſecretary, with a ſalary of two hun-

dred pounds a year: Thomſon likewiſe had a penſion; and they were aſſociated in the compoſition of the Maſque of *Alfred*, which in its original ſtate was played at Cliefden in 1740; it was afterwards almoſt wholly changed by Mallet, and brought upon the ſtage at Drury-Lane in 1751, but with no great ſucceſs.

Mallet, in a familiar converſation with Garrick, diſcourſing of the diligence which he was then exerting upon the Life of *Marlborough*, let him know that in the ſeries of great men, quickly to be exhibited, he ſhould *find a nich* for the hero of the theatre. Garrick profeſſed to wonder by what artifice he could be introduced; but Mallet let him know, that, by a dexterous anticipation, he ſhould fix him in a conſpicuous place. "Mr. "Mallet," ſays Garrick, in his gratitude of exultation, "have you left off to write for "the ſtage?" Mallet then confeſſed that he had a drama in his hands. Garrick promiſed to act it; and *Alfred* was produced.

The long retardation of the Life of the duke of Marlborough ſhews, with ſtrong conviction,

viction, how little confidence can be placed in poſthumous renown. When he died, it was ſoon determined that his ſtory ſhould be delivered to poſterity; and the papers ſuppoſed to contain the neceſſary information were delivered to the lord Moleſworth, who had been his favourite in Flanders. When Moleſworth died, the ſame papers were tranſferred with the ſame deſign to Sir Richard Steele, who in ſome of his exigencies put them in pawn. They then remained with the old dutcheſs, who in her will aſſigned the taſk to Glover and Mallet, with a reward of a thouſand pounds, and a prohibition to inſert any verſes. Glover rejected, I ſuppoſe, with diſdain the legacy, and devolved the whole work upon Mallet; who had from the late duke of Marlborough a penſion to promote his induſtry, and who talked of the diſcoveries which he made; but left not, when he died, any hiſtorical labours behind him.

While he was in the Prince's ſervice he publiſhed *Muſtapha*, with a Prologue by Thomſon, not mean, but far inferior to that which he had received from Mallet for

Agamemnon.

Agamemnon. The Epilogue, ſaid to be written by a friend, was compoſed in haſte by Mallet, in the place of one promiſed, which was never given. This tragedy was dedicated to the Prince his maſter. It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1739, and was well received, but was never revived.

In 1740, he produced, as has been already mentioned, the maſque of *Alfred*, in conjunction with Thomſon.

For ſome time afterwards he lay at reſt. After a long interval, his next work was *Amyntor and Theodora* (1747), a long ſtory in blank verſe; in which it cannot be denied that there is copiouſneſs and elegance of language, vigour of ſentiment, and imagery well adapted to take poſſeſſion of the fancy. But it is blank verſe. The firſt ſale was not great, and it is now loſt in forgetfulneſs.

Mallet, by addreſs or accident, perhaps by his dependance on the Prince, found his way to Bolingbroke; a man whoſe pride and petulance made his kindneſs difficult to gain, or keep; and whom Mallet was content to court

by

by an act, which, I hope, was unwillingly performed. When it was found that Pope had clandeſtinely printed an unauthoriſed number of the pamphlet called the *Patriot King*, Bolingbroke, in a fit of uſeleſs fury, reſolved to blaſt his memory, and employed Mallet (1747) as the executioner of his vengeance. Mallet had not virtue, or had not ſpirit, to refuſe the office; and was rewarded, not long after, with the legacy of lord Bolingbroke's works.

Many of the political pieces had been written during the oppoſition to Walpole, and given to Franklin, as he ſuppoſed, in perpetuity. Theſe, among the reſt, were claimed by the will. The queſtion was referred to arbitrators; but when they decided againſt Mallet, he refuſed to yield to the award; and by the help of Millar the bookſeller publiſhed all that he could find, but with ſucceſs very much below his expectation.

In 1753, his maſque of *Britannia* was acted at Drury-Lane, and his tragedy of *Elvira* in 1763; in which year he was appointed keeper

keeper of the book of Entries for ſhips in the port of London.

In the beginning of the laſt war, when the nation was exaſperated by ill ſucceſs, he was employed to turn the publick vengeance upon Byng, and wrote a letter of accuſation under the character of a *Plain Man*. The paper was with great induſtry circulated and diſperſed; and he, for his ſeaſonable intervention, had a conſiderable penſion beſtowed upon him, which he retained to his death.

Towards the end of his life he went with his wife to France; but after a while, finding his health declining, he returned alone to England, and died in April 1765.

He was twice married, and by his firſt wife had ſeveral children. One daughter, who married an Italian of rank named Cileſia, wrote a tragedy called *Almida*, which was acted at Drury-Lane. His ſecond wife was the daughter of a nobleman's ſteward, who had a conſiderable fortune, which ſhe took care to retain in her own hands.

His

His ſtature was diminutive, but he was regularly formed; his appearance, till he grew corpulent, was agreeable, and he ſuffered it to want no recommendation that dreſs could give it. His converſation was elegant and eaſy. The reſt of his character may, without injury to his memory, ſink into ſilence.

As a writer, he cannot be placed in any high claſs. There is no ſpecies of compoſition in which he was eminent. His Dramas had their day, a ſhort day, and are forgotten: his blank verſe ſeems to my ear the echo of Thomſon. His Life of Bacon is known as it is appended to Bacon's volumes, but is no longer mentioned. His works are ſuch as a writer, buſtling in the world, ſhewing himſelf in publick, and emerging occaſionally from time to time into notice, might keep alive by his perſonal influence; but which, conveying little information, and giving no great pleaſure, muſt ſoon give way, as the ſucceſſion of things produces new topicks of converſation, and other modes of amuſement.

AKENSIDE.

AKENSIDE.

MARK AKENSIDE was born on the ninth of November, 1721, at Newcaſtle upon Tyne. His father, Mark, was a butcher of the Preſbyterian ſect; his mother's name was Mary Lumſden. He received the firſt part of his education at the grammar-ſchool of Newcaſtle; and was afterwards inſtructed by Mr. Wilſon, who kept a private academy.

At the age of eighteen he was ſent to Edinburgh, that he might qualify himſelf for the office of a diſſenting miniſter, and received ſome aſſiſtance from the fund which the Diſſenters employ in educating young

men of ſcanty fortune. But a wider view of the world opened other ſcenes, and prompted other hopes: he determined to ſtudy phyſic, and repaid that contribution, which, being received for a different purpoſe, he juſtly thought it diſhonourable to retain.

Whether, when he reſolved not to be a diſſenting miniſter, he ceaſed to be a Diſſenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unneceſſary and outrageous zeal for what he called and thought liberty; a zeal which ſometimes diſguiſes from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it poſſeſſes, an envious deſire of plundering wealth or degrading greatneſs; and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an impetuous eagerneſs to ſubvert and confound, with very little care what ſhall be eſtabliſhed.

Akenſide was one of thoſe poets who have felt very early the motions of genius, and one of thoſe ſtudents who have very early ſtored their memories with ſentiments and images. Many of his performances were produced in his youth; and his greateſt work,

work, *The Pleaſures of Imagination*, appeared in 1744. I have heard Dodſley, by whom it was publiſhed, relate, that when the copy was offered him, the price demanded for it, which was an hundred and twenty pounds, being ſuch as he was not inclined to give precipitately, he carried the work to Pope, who, having looked into it, adviſed him not to make a niggardly offer; for *this was no every-day writer.*

In 1741 he went to Leyden, in purſuit of medical knowledge; and three years afterwards (May 16, 1744) became doctor of phyſick, having, according to the cuſtom of the Dutch Univerſities, publiſhed a theſis, or diſſertation. The ſubject which he choſe was *the Original and Growth of the Human Fœtus*; in which he is ſaid to have departed, with great judgement, from the opinion then eſtabliſhed, and to have delivered that which has been ſince confirmed and received.

Akenſide was a young man, warm with every notion that by nature or accident had been connected with the ſound of liberty, and by an excentricity which ſuch diſpoſitions

do not eaſily avoid, a lover of contradiction, and no friend to any thing eſtabliſhed. He adopted Shafteſbury's fooliſh aſſertion of the efficacy of ridicule for the diſcovery of truth. For this he was attacked by Warburton, and defended by Dyſon: Warburton afterwards reprinted his remarks at the end of his dedication to the Freethinkers.

The reſult of all the arguments which have been produced in a long and eager diſcuſſion of this idle queſtion, may be eaſily collected. If ridicule be applied to any poſition as the teſt of truth, it will then become a queſtion whether ſuch ridicule be juſt; and this can only be decided by the application of truth, as the teſt of ridicule. Two men, fearing, one a real and the other a fancied danger, will be for a while equally expoſed to the inevitable conſequences of cowardice, contemptuous cenſure, and ludicrous repreſentation; and the true ſtate of both caſes muſt be known, before it can be decided whoſe terror is rational, and whoſe is ridiculous; who is to be pitied, and who to be deſpiſed.

In

In the reviſal of his poem, which he died before he had finiſhed, he omitted the lines which had given occaſion to Warburton's objections.

He publiſhed, ſoon after his return from Leyden (1745), his firſt collection of odes; and was impelled by his rage of patriotiſm to write a very acrimonious epiſtle to Pulteney, whom he ſtigmatizes, under the name of Curio, as the betrayer of his country.

Being now to live by his profeſſion, he firſt commenced phyſician at Northampton, where Dr. Stonehouſe then practiſed, with ſuch reputation and ſucceſs, that a ſtranger was not likely to gain ground upon him. Akenſide tried the conteſt a while; and, having deafened the place with clamours for liberty, removed to Hampſtead, where he reſided more than two years, and then fixed himſelf in London, the proper place for a man of accompliſhments like his.

At London he was known as a poet, but was ſtill to make his way as a phyſician;

and would perhaps have been reduced to great exigencies, but that Mr. Dyſon, with an ardour of friendſhip that has not many examples, allowed him three hundred pounds a year. Thus ſupported, he advanced gradually in medical reputation, but never attained any great extent of practice, or eminence of popularity. A phyſician in a great city ſeems to be the mere play-thing of Fortune; his degree of reputation is, for the moſt part, totally caſual: they that employ him, know not his excellence; they that reject him, know not his deficience. By an acute obſerver, who had looked on the tranſactions of the medical world for half a century, a very curious book might be written on the *Fortune of Phyſicians*.

Akenſide appears not to have been wanting to his own ſucceſs: he placed himſelf in view by all the common methods; he became a Fellow of the Royal Society; he obtained a degree at Cambridge, and was admitted into the College of Phyſicians; he wrote little poetry, but publiſhed, from time to time, medical eſſays and obſervations; he became phyſician to St. Thomas's Hoſpital; having

having read the Gulſtonian Lectures in Anatomy, he began to give, for the Cronian Lecture, a hiſtory of the revival of Learning, from which he ſoon deſiſted; and, in converſation, he very eagerly forced himſelf into notice by an ambitious oſtentation of elegance and literature.

His Diſcourſe on the Dyſentery (1764) was conſidered as a very conſpicuous ſpecimen of Latinity, which entitled him to the ſame height of place among the ſcholars as he poſſeſſed before among the wits; and he might perhaps have riſen to a greater elevation of character, but that his ſtudies were ended with his life, by a putrid fever, June 23, 1770, in the forty-ninth year of his age.

AKENSIDE is to be conſidered as a didactick and lyrick poet. His great work is the *Pleaſures of Imagination*; a performance which, publiſhed, as it was, at the age of twenty-three, raiſed expectations, which

were not afterwards very amply ſatisfied. It has undoubtedly a juſt claim to very particular notice, as an example of great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquiſitions, of a young mind ſtored with images, and much exerciſed in combining and comparing them.

With the philoſophical or religious tenets of the author I have nothing to do; my buſineſs is with his poetry. The ſubject is well-choſen, as it includes all images that can ſtrike or pleaſe, and thus compriſes every ſpecies of poetical delight. The only difficulty is in the choice of examples and illuſtrations, and it is not eaſy in ſuch exuberance of matter to find the middle point between penury and ſatiety. The parts ſeem artificially diſpoſed, with ſufficient coherence, ſo as that they cannot change their places without injury to the general deſign.

His images are diſplayed with ſuch luxuriance of expreſſion, that they are hidden, like Butler's Moon, by a *Veil of Light*; they are forms fantaſtically loſt under ſuperfluity of dreſs. *Pars minima eſt ipſa Puella ſui.* The words

words are multiplied till the ſenſe is hardly perceived; attention deſerts the mind, and ſettles in the ear. The reader wanders through the gay diffuſion, ſometimes amazed, and ſometimes delighted; but, after many turnings in the flowery labyrinth, comes out as he went in. He remarked little, and laid hold on nothing.

To his verſification juſtice requires that praiſe ſhould not be denied. In the general fabrication of his lines he is perhaps ſuperior to any other writer of blank verſe; his flow is ſmooth, and his pauſes are muſical; but the concatenation of his verſes is commonly too long continued, and the full cloſe does not recur with ſufficient frequency. The ſenſe is carried on through a long interexture of complicated clauſes, and as nothing is diſtinguiſhed, nothing is remembered.

The exemption which blank verſe affords from the neceſſity of cloſing the ſenſe with the couplet, betrays luxuriant and active minds into ſuch indulgence, that they pile image upon image, ornament upon ornament; and are not eaſily perſuaded to cloſe

the

the ſenſe at all. Blank verſe will therefore, I fear, be too often found in deſcription exuberant, in argument loquacious, and in narration tireſome.

His diction is certainly ſo far poetical as it is not proſaick, and ſo far valuable as it is not common. He is to be commended as having fewer artifices of diſguſt than moſt of his brethren of the blank ſong. He rarely either recalls old phraſes or twiſts his metre into harſh inverſions. The ſenſe however of his words is ſtrained; when *he views the* Ganges *from* Alpine *heights*; that is, from mountains like the Alps. And the pedant ſurely intrudes, but when was blank verſe without pedantry? when he tells how *Planets* abſolve *the ſtated round of Time*.

It is generally known to the readers of poetry that he intended to reviſe and augment this work, but died before he had completed his deſign. The reformed work as he left it, and the addition which he had made, are very properly retained in the late collection. He ſeems to have ſomewhat contracted his diffuſion; but I know not whether he has gained

gained in cloſeneſs what he has loſt in ſplendor. In the additional book, the *Tale of Solon* is too long.

His other poems are now to be conſidered; but a ſhort conſideration will diſpatch them. It is not eaſy to gueſs why he addicted himſelf ſo diligently to lyrick poetry, having neither the eaſe and airineſs of the lighter, nor the vehemence and elevation of the grander ode. When he lays his ill-fated hand upon his harp, his former powers ſeem to deſert him; he has no longer his luxuriance of expreſſion, nor variety of images. His thoughts are cold, and his words inelegant. Yet ſuch was his love of lyricks, that, having written with great vigour and poignancy his *Epiſtle to Curio*, he transformed it afterwards into an ode diſgraceful only to its author.

Of his odes nothing favourable can be ſaid; the ſentiments commonly want force, nature, or novelty; the diction is ſometimes harſh and uncouth, the ſtanzas ill-conſtructed and unpleaſant, and the rhymes diſſonant, or unſkilfully diſpoſed, too diſtant from each

other, or arranged with too little regard to eſtabliſhed uſe, and therefore perplexing to the ear, which in a ſhort compoſition has not time to grow familiar with an innovation.

To examine ſuch compoſitions ſingly, cannot be required; they have doubtleſs brighter and darker parts: but when they are once found to be generally dull, all further labour may be ſpared; for to what uſe can the work be criticiſed that will not be read?

GRAY.

G R A Y.

G R A Y.

THOMAS GRAY, the ſon of Mr. Philip Gray, a ſcrivener of London, was born in Cornhill, November 26, 1716. His grammatical education he received at Eaton under Mr. Antrobus, his mother's brother; and when he left ſchool, in 1734, entered a penſioner at Peterhouſe in Cambridge.

The tranſition from the ſchool to the college is, to moſt young ſcholars, the time from which they date their years of manhood, liberty, and happineſs; but Gray ſeems to have been very little delighted with academical gratifications; he liked at Cambridge neither

neither the mode of life nor the faſhion of ſtudy, and lived ſullenly on to the time when his attendance on lectures was no longer required. As he intended to profeſs the Common Law, he took no degree.

When he had been at Cambridge about five years, Mr. Horace Walpole, whoſe friendſhip he had gained at Eaton, invited him to travel with him as his companion. They wandered through France into Italy; and Gray's Letters contain a very pleaſing account of many parts of their journey. But unequal friendſhips are eaſily diſſolved: at Florence they quarrelled, and parted; and Mr. Walpole is now content to have it told that it was by his fault. If we look however without prejudice on the world, we ſhall find that men, whoſe conſciouſneſs of their own merit ſets them above the compliances of ſervility, are apt enough in their aſſociation with ſuperiors to watch their own dignity with troubleſome and punctilious jealouſy, and in the fervour of independance to exact that attention which they refuſe to pay. Part they did, whatever was the quarrel, and the reſt of their travels was doubtleſs more

unpleaſant to them both. Gray continued his journey in a manner ſuitable to his own little fortune, with only an occaſional ſervant.

He returned to England in September 1741, and in about two months afterwards buried his father; who had, by an injudicious waſte of money upon a new houſe, ſo much leſſened his fortune, that Gray thought himſelf too poor to ſtudy the law. He therefore retired to Cambridge, where he ſoon after became Bachelor of Civil Law; and where, without liking the place or its inhabitants, or pretending to like them, he paſſed, except a ſhort reſidence at London, the reſt of his life.

About this time he was deprived of Mr. Weſt, the ſon of a chancellor of Ireland, a friend on whom he appears to have ſet a high value, and who deſerved his eſteem by the powers which he ſhews in his Letters, and in the Ode to *May*, which Mr. Maſon has preſerved, as well as by the ſincerity with which, when Gray ſent him part of *Agrippina*, a tragedy that he had juſt begun, he gave an opinion which probably intercepted

the progreſs of the work, and which the judgement of every reader will confirm. It was certainly no loſs to the Engliſh ſtage that *Agrippina* was never finiſhed.

In this year (1742) Gray ſeems firſt to have applied himſelf ſeriouſly to poetry; for in this year were produced the *Ode to Spring*, his *Proſpect of Eaton*, and his *Ode to Adverſity*. He began likewiſe a Latin poem, *de Principiis cogitandi*.

It ſeems to be the opinion of Mr. Maſon, that his firſt ambition was to have excelled in Latin poetry: perhaps it were reaſonable to wiſh that he had proſecuted his deſign; for though there is at preſent ſome embarraſſment in his phraſe, and ſome harſhneſs in his Lyrick numbers, his copiouſneſs of language is ſuch as very few poſſeſs; and his lines, even when imperfect, diſcover a writer whom practice would quickly have made ſkilful.

He now lived on at Peterhouſe, very little ſolicitous what others did or thought, and cultivated his mind and enlarged his views without

without any other purpoſe than of improving and amuſing himſelf; when Mr. Maſon, being elected fellow of Pembroke-hall, brought him a companion who was afterwards to be his editor, and whoſe fondneſs and fidelity has kindled in him a zeal of admiration, which cannot be reaſonably expected from the neutrality of a ſtranger and the coldneſs of a critick.

In this retirement he wrote (1747) an ode on the *Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat*; and the year afterwards attempted a poem of more importance, on *Government and Education*, of which the fragments which remain have many excellent lines.

His next production (1750) was his far-famed *Elegy in the Church-yard*, which, finding its way into a Magazine, firſt, I believe, made him known to the publick.

An invitation from lady Cobham about this time gave occaſion to an odd compoſition called *a Long Story*, which, though perhaps it adds little to Gray's character, was inſerted at the end of my preface to the late Collection.

Several of his pieces were publiſhed (1753), with deſigns, by Mr. Bentley; and, that they might in ſome form or other make a book, only one ſide of each leaf was printed. I believe the poems and the plates recommended each other ſo well, that the whole impreſſion was ſoon bought. This year he loſt his mother.

Some time afterwards (1756) ſome young men of the college, whoſe chambers were near his, diverted themſelves with diſturbing him by frequent and troubleſome noiſes. This inſolence, having endured it a while, he repreſented to the governors of the ſociety, among whom perhaps he had no friends; and, finding his complaint little regarded, removed himſelf to Pembroke-hall.

In 1757 he publiſhed *The Progreſs of Poetry* and *The Bard*, two compoſitions at which the readers of poetry were at firſt content to gaze in mute amazement. Some that tried them confeſſed their inability to underſtand them, though Warburton ſaid that they were underſtood as well as the works

works of Milton and Shakſpeare, which it is the faſhion to praiſe. Garrick wrote a few lines in their praiſe. Some hardy champions undertook to reſcue them from neglect, and in a ſhort time many were content to be ſhewn beauties which they could not ſee.

Gray's reputation was now ſo high, that, after the death of Cibber, he had the honour of refuſing the laurel, which was then beſtowed on Mr. Whitehead.

His curioſity, not long after, drew him away from Cambridge to a lodging near the Muſeum, where he reſided near three years, reading and tranſcribing; and, ſo far as can be diſcovered, very little affected by two odes on *Oblivion* and *Obſcurity*, in which his Lyrick performances were ridiculed with much contempt and much ingenuity.

When the Profeſſor of Modern Languages at Cambridge died, he was, as he ſays, *cockered and ſpirited up*, till he aſked it of lord Bute, who ſent him a civil refuſal; and the place was given to Mr. Brocket, the tutor of Sir James Lowther.

His conſtitution was weak, and believing that his health was promoted by exerciſe and change of place, he undertook (1765) a journey into Scotland, of which his account, ſo far as it extends, is very curious and elegant; for as his comprehenſion was ample, his curioſity extended to all the works of art, all the appearances of nature, and all the monuments of paſt events. He naturally contracted a friendſhip with Dr. Beattie, whom he found a poet, a philoſopher, and a good man. The Mareſchal College at Aberdeen offered him the degree of Doctor of Laws, which, having omitted to take it at Cambridge, he thought it decent to refuſe.

What he had formerly ſolicited in vain, was at laſt given him without ſolicitation. The Profeſſorſhip of Languages became again vacant, and he received (1768) an offer of it from the duke of Grafton. He accepted, and retained it to his death; always deſigning lectures, but never reading them; uneaſy at his neglect of duty, and appeaſing his uneaſineſs with deſigns of reformation, and with a reſolution which he believed himſelf

ſelf to have made of reſigning the office, if he found himſelf unable to diſcharge it.

Ill health made another journey neceſſary, and he viſited (1769) Weſtmoreland and Cumberland. He that reads his epiſtolary narration wiſhes, that to travel, and to tell his travels, had been more of his employment; but it is by ſtudying at home that we muſt obtain the ability of travelling with intelligence and improvement.

His travels and his ſtudies were now near their end. The gout, of which he had ſuſtained many weak attacks, fell upon his ſtomach, and, yielding to no medicines, produced ſtrong convulſions, which (July 30, 1771) terminated in death.

His character I am willing to adopt, as Mr. Maſon has done, from a nameleſs writer; and am as willing as his warmeſt friend to believe it true,

"Perhaps he was the moſt learned man "in Europe. He was equally acquainted "with the elegant and profound parts of

" ſcience, and that not ſuperficially but
" thoroughly. He knew every branch of
" hiſtory, both natural and civil; had read
" all the original hiſtorians of England,
" France, and Italy; and was a great anti-
" quarian. Criticiſm, metaphyſics, morals,
" politics, made a principal part of his
" ſtudy; voyages and travels of all ſorts
" were his favourite amuſements; and he
" had a fine taſte in painting, prints, archi-
" tecture, and gardening. With ſuch a
" fund of knowledge, his converſation muſt
" have been equally inſtructing and enter-
" taining; but he was alſo a good man, a
" man of virtue and humanity. There is
" no character without ſome ſpeck, ſome
" imperfection; and I think the greateſt de-
" fect in his was an affectation in delicacy,
" or rather effeminacy, and a viſible faſtidi-
" ouſneſs, or contempt and diſdain of his
" inferiors in ſcience. He alſo had, in ſome
" degree, that weakneſs which diſguſted Vol-
" taire ſo much in Mr. Congreve: though he
" ſeemed to value others chiefly according to
" the progreſs they had made in knowledge,
" yet he could not bear to be conſidered
" himſelf merely as a man of letters; and

" though

"though without birth, or fortune, or ſta-
"tion, his deſire was to be looked upon as
"a private independent gentleman, who
"read for his amuſement. Perhaps it may
"be ſaid, What ſignifies ſo much know-
"ledge, when it produced ſo little? Is it
"worth taking ſo much pains to leave no
"memorial but a few poems? But let it be
"conſidered that Mr. Gray was, to others,
"at leaſt innocently employed; to himſelf,
"certainly beneficially. His time paſſed
"agreeably; he was every day making ſome
"new acquiſition in ſcience; his mind was
"enlarged, his heart ſoftened, his virtue
"ſtrengthened; the world and mankind were
"ſhewn to him without a maſk; and he was
"taught to conſider every thing as trifling,
"and unworthy of the attention of a wiſe
"man, except the purſuit of knowledge
"and practice of virtue, in that ſtate where-
"in God hath placed us."

To this character Mr. Maſon has added a more particular account of Gray's ſkill in zoology. He has remarked, that Gray's effeminacy was affected moſt *before thoſe whom he did not wiſh to pleaſe*; and that he is unjuſtly

juſtly charged with making knowledge his ſole reaſon of preference, as he paid his eſteem to none whom he did not likewiſe believe to be good.

What has occurred to me, from the ſlight inſpection of his Letters in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large graſp; that his curioſity was unlimited, and his judgement cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all, but that he was faſtidious and hard to pleaſe. His contempt however is often employed, where I hope it will be approved, upon ſcepticiſm and infidelity. His ſhort account of Shafteſbury I will inſert,

" You ſay you cannot conceive how lord " Shafteſbury came to be a philoſopher in " vogue; I will tell you: firſt, he was a " lord; ſecondly, he was as vain as any of " his readers; thirdly, men are very prone " to believe what they do not underſtand; " fourthly, they will believe any thing at " all, provided they are under no obliga- " tion to believe it; fifthly, they love to " take a new road, even when that road

" leads

" leads no where; ſixthly, he was reckoned
" a fine writer, and ſeems always to mean
" more than he ſaid. Would you have any
" more reaſons? An interval of above forty
" years has pretty well deſtroyed the charm.
" A dead lord ranks with commoners: va-
" nity is no longer intereſted in the matter;
" for a new road is become an old one."

Mr. Maſon has added, from his own knowledge, that though Gray was poor, he was not eager of money; and that, out of the little that he had, he was very willing to help the neceſſitous.

As a writer he had this peculiarity, that he did not write his pieces firſt rudely, and then correct them, but laboured every line as it aroſe in the train of compoſition; and he had a notion not very peculiar, that he could not write but at certain times, or at happy moments; a fantaſtick foppery, to which my kindneſs for a man of learning and of virtue wiſhes him to have been ſuperior.

GRAY's

GRAY's Poetry is now to be conſidered; and I hope not to be looked on as an enemy to his name, if I confeſs that I contemplate it with leſs pleaſure than his life.

His ode on *Spring* has ſomething poetical, both in the language and the thought; but the language is too luxuriant, and the thoughts have nothing new. There has of late ariſen a practice of giving to adjectives, derived from ſubſtantives, the termination of participles; ſuch as the *cultured* plain, the *daſied* bank; but I was ſorry to ſee, in the lines of a ſcholar like Gray, the *honied* Spring. The morality is natural, but too ſtale; the concluſion is pretty.

The poem on the *Cat* was doubtleſs by its author conſidered as a trifle, but it is not a happy trifle. In the firſt ſtanza *the azure flowers* that *blow*, ſhew reſolutely a rhyme is ſometimes made when it cannot eaſily be found. *Selima*, the *Cat*, is called a nymph, with ſome violence both to language and ſenſe; but there is good uſe made of it when it is done; for of the two lines,

What

What female heart can gold deſpiſe?
What cat's averſe to fiſh?

the firſt relates merely to the nymph, and the ſecond only to the cat. The ſixth ſtanza contains a melancholy truth, that *a favourite has no friend*; but the laſt ends in a pointed ſentence of no relation to the purpoſe; if *what gliſtered* had been *gold*, the cat would not have gone into the water; and, if ſhe had, would not leſs have been drowned.

The *Proſpect of Eaton College* ſuggeſts nothing to Gray, which every beholder does not equally think and feel. His ſupplication to father *Thames*, to tell him who drives the hoop or toſſes the ball, is uſeleſs and puerile. Father *Thames* has no better means of knowing than himſelf. His epithet *buxom health* is not elegant; he ſeems not to underſtand the word. Gray thought his language more poetical as it was more remote from common uſe: finding in Dryden *honey redolent of Spring*, an expreſſion that reaches the utmoſt limits of our language, Gray drove it a little more beyond common apprehenſion,

ſion, by making *gales* to be *redolent of joy and youth.*

Of the *Ode on Adverſity*, the hint was at firſt taken from *O Diva, gratum quæ regis Antium*, but Gray has excelled his original by the variety of his ſentiments, and by their moral application. Of this piece, at once poetical and rational, I will not by ſlight objections violate the dignity.

My proceſs has now brought me to the *wonderful Wonder of Wonders*, the two Siſter Odes; by which, though either vulgar ignorance or common ſenſe at firſt univerſally rejected them, many have been ſince perſuaded to think themſelves delighted. I am one of thoſe that are willing to be pleaſed, and therefore would gladly find the meaning of the firſt ſtanza of the *Progreſs of Poetry.*

Gray ſeems in his rapture to confound the images of *ſpreading ſound* and *running water.* A *ſtream of muſick* may be allowed; but where does *Muſick*, however *ſmooth and ſtrong*, after having viſited the *verdant vales*, *row down*

down the ſteep amain, ſo as that *rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar?* If this be ſaid of *Muſick*, it is nonſenſe; if it be ſaid of *Water*, it is nothing to the purpoſe.

The ſecond ſtanza, exhibiting Mars's car and Jove's eagle, is unworthy of further notice. Criticiſm diſdains to chaſe a ſchool-boy to his common places.

To the third it may likewiſe be objected, that it is drawn from Mythology, though ſuch as may be more eaſily aſſimilated to real life. Idalia's *velvet-green* has ſomething of cant. An epithet or metaphor drawn from Nature ennobles Art; an epithet or metaphor drawn from Art degrades Nature. Gray is too fond of words arbitrarily compounded. *Many-twinkling* was formerly cenſured as not analogical; we may ſay *many-ſpotted*, but ſcarcely *many-ſpotting*. This ſtanza, however, has ſomething pleaſing.

Of the ſecond ternary of ſtanzas, the firſt endeavours to tell ſomething, and would have told it, had it not been croſſed by Hyperion: the ſecond deſcribes well enough the

the univerſal prevalence of Poetry; but I am afraid that the concluſion will not riſe from the premiſes. The caverns of the North and the plains of Chili are not the reſidences of *Glory* and *generous Shame*. But that Poetry and Virtue go always together is an opinion ſo pleaſing, that I can forgive him who reſolves to think it true.

The third ſtanza ſounds big with *Delphi*, and *Egean*, and *Iliſſus*, and *Meander*, and *hallowed fountain* and *ſolemn ſound*; but in all Gray's odes there is a kind of cumbrous ſplendor which we wiſh away. His poſition is at laſt falſe: in the time of Dante and Petrarch, from whom he derives our firſt ſchool of Poetry, Italy was over-run by *tyrant power* and *coward vice*; nor was our ſtate much better when we firſt borrowed the Italian arts.

Of the third ternary, the firſt gives a mythological birth of Shakſpeare. What is ſaid of that mighty genius is true; but it is not ſaid happily: the real effects of this poetical power are put out of ſight by the pomp of machinery. Where truth is ſufficient to

fill

fill the mind, fiction is worſe than uſeleſs; the counterfeit debaſes the genuine.

His account of Milton's blindneſs, if we ſuppoſe it cauſed by ſtudy in the formation of his poem, a ſuppoſition ſurely allowable, is poetically true, and happily imagined. But the *car* of Dryden, with his *two courſers*, has nothing in it peculiar; it is a car in which any other rider may be placed.

The Bard appears, at the firſt view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it ſuperior to its original; and, if preference depends only on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgement is right. There is in *The Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is leſs than to invent, and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival diſguſts us with apparent and unconquerable falſehood. *Incredulus odi.*

To ſelect a ſingular event, and ſwell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of

ſpectres and predictions, has little difficulty, for he that forſakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little uſe; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find ſomething to be imitated or declined. I do not ſee that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.

His ſtanzas are too long, eſpecially his epodes; the ode is finiſhed before the ear has learned its meaſures, and conſequently before it can receive pleaſure from their conſonance and recurrence.

Of the firſt ſtanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praiſe only to the inventor. It is in the power of any man to ruſh abruptly upon his ſubject, that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armſtrong*,

Is there ever a man in all Scotland—

The initial reſemblances, or alliterations, *ruin, ruthleſs, helm nor hauberk*, are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at ſublimity.

In

In the ſecond ſtanza the *Bard* is well deſcribed; but in the third we have the puerilities of obſolete mythology. When we are told that *Cadwallo huſh'd the ſtormy main*, and that *Modred* made *huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-top'd head*, attention recoils from the repetition of a tale that, even when it was firſt heard, was heard with ſcorn.

The *weaving* of the *winding ſheet* he borrowed, as he owns, from the northern Bards; but their texture, however, was very properly the work of female powers, as the art of ſpinning the thread of life in another mythology. Theft is always dangerous; Gray has made weavers of his ſlaughtered bards, by a fiction outrageous and incongruous. They are then called upon to *Weave the warp, and weave the woof*, perhaps with no great propriety; for it is by croſſing the *woof* with the *warp* that men *weave* the *web* or piece; and the firſt line was dearly bought by the admiſſion of its wretched correſpondent, *Give ample room and verge enough*. He has, however, no other line as bad.

The third ſtanza of the ſecond ternary is commended, I think, beyond its merit. The perſonification is indiſtinct. *Thirſt* and *Hunger* are not alike; and their features, to make the imagery perfect, ſhould have been diſcriminated. We are told, in the ſame ſtanza, how *towers* are *fed*. But I will no longer look for particular faults; yet let it be obſerved that the ode might have been concluded with an action of better example; but ſuicide is always to be had, without expence of thought.

Theſe odes are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments; they ſtrike, rather than pleaſe; the images are magnified by affectation; the language is laboured into harſhneſs. The mind of the writer ſeems to work with unnatural violence. *Double, double, toil and trouble.* He has a kind of ſtrutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe. His art and his ſtruggle are too viſible, and there is too little appearance of eaſe or nature.

To ſay that he has no beauties, would be unjuſt: a man like him, of great learning and

and great induſtry, could not but produce ſomething valuable. When he pleaſes leaſt, it can only be ſaid that a good deſign was ill directed.

His tranſlations of Northern and Welſh Poetry deſerve praiſe; the imagery is preſerved, perhaps often improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

In the character of his Elegy I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common ſenſe of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of ſubtilty and the dogmatiſm of learning, muſt be finally decided all claim to poetical honours. The *Church-yard* abounds with images which find a mirrour in every mind, and with ſentiments to which every boſom returns an echo. The four ſtanzas beginning *Yet even theſe bones*, are to me original: I have never ſeen the notions in any other place; yet he that reads them here, perſuades himſelf that he has always felt them. Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and uſeleſs to praiſe him.

LYTTELTON.

LYTTELTON.

GEORGE LYTTELTON, the ſon of Sir Thomas Lyttelton of Hagley in Worceſterſhire, was born in 1709. He was educated at Eaton, where he was ſo much diſtinguiſhed, that his exerciſes were recommended as models to his ſchool-fellows.

From Eaton he went to Chriſt-church, where he retained the ſame reputation of ſuperiority, and diſplayed his abilities to the publick in a poem on *Blenheim*.

He was a very early writer, both in verſe and proſe. His *Progreſs of Love*, and his *Perſian Letters*, were both written when he was

was very young; and, indeed, the character of a young man is very viſible in both. The Verſes cant of ſhepherds and flocks, and crooks dreſſed with flowers; and the Letters have ſomething of that indiſtinct and headſtrong ardour for liberty which a man of genius always catches when he enters the world, and always ſuffers to cool as he paſſes forward.

He ſtaid not long at Oxford; for in 1728 he began his travels, and ſaw France and Italy. When he returned, he obtained a ſeat in parliament, and ſoon diſtinguiſhed himſelf among the moſt eager opponents of Sir Robert Walpole, though his father, who was one of the Admiralty, always voted with the Court.

For many years the name of George Lyttelton was ſeen in every account of every debate in the Houſe of Commons. He oppoſed the ſtanding army; he oppoſed the exciſe; he ſupported the motion for petitioning the King to remove Walpole. His zeal was conſidered by the courtiers not only as violent, but as acrimonious and malignant; and

and when Walpole was at laſt driven from his places, every effort was made by his friends, and many friends he had, to exclude Lyttelton from the Secret Committee.

The Prince of Wales, being (1737) driven from St. James's, kept a ſeparate court, and opened his arms to the opponents of the miniſtry. Mr. Lyttelton was made his ſecretary, and was ſuppoſed to have great influence in the direction of his conduct. He perſuaded his maſter, whoſe buſineſs it was now to be popular, that he would advance his character by patronage. Mallet was made under-ſecretary, and Thomſon had a penſion. For Thomſon Lyttelton always retained his kindneſs, and was able at laſt to place him at eaſe.

Moore courted his favour by an apologetical poem, called *The Trial of Selim*, for which he was paid with kind words, which, as is common, raiſed great hopes, that at laſt were diſappointed.

Lyttelton now ſtood in the firſt rank of oppoſition; and Pope, who was incited, it is

not eaſy to ſay how, to increaſe the clamour againſt the miniſtry, commended him among the other patriots. This drew upon him the reproaches of Fox, who, in the houſe, imputed to him as a crime his intimacy with a lampooner ſo unjuſt and licentious. Lyttelton ſupported his friend, and replied, that he thought it an honour to be received into the familiarity of ſo great a poet.

While he was thus conſpicuous, he married (1741) Miſs Lucy Forteſcue of Devonſhire, by whom he had a ſon, the late lord Lyttelton, and two daughters, and with whom he appears to have lived in the higheſt degree of connubial felicity: but human pleaſures are ſhort; ſhe died in childbed about five years afterwards, and he ſolaced his grief by writing a long poem to her memory.

He did not however condemn himſelf to perpetual ſolitude and ſorrow; for, after a while, he was content to ſeek happineſs again by a ſecond marriage with the daughter of Sir Robert Rich; but the experiment was unſucceſsful.

At

At length, after a long ſtruggle, Walpole gave way, and honour and profit were diſtributed among his conquerors. Lyttelton was made (1744) one of the Lords of the Treaſury; and from that time was engaged in ſupporting the ſchemes of the miniſtry.

Politicks did not, however, ſo much engage him as to withhold his thoughts from things of more importance. He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt converſation, entertained doubts of the truth of Chriſtianity; but he thought the time now come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himſelf ſeriouſly to the great queſtion. His ſtudies, being honeſt, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true, and what he had learned he endeavoured to teach (1747), by *Obſervations on the Converſion of St. Paul*; a treatiſe to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a ſpecious anſwer. This book his father had the happineſs of ſeeing, and expreſſed his pleaſure in a letter which deſerves to be inſerted.

" I have

" I have read your religious treatiſe with " infinite pleaſure and ſatisfaction. The " ſtyle is fine and clear, the arguments cloſe, " cogent, and irreſiſtible. May the King " of kings, whoſe glorious cauſe you have " ſo well defended, reward your pious la- " bours, and grant that I may be found " worthy, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt, " to be an eye-witneſs of that happineſs " which I don't doubt he will bountifully " beſtow upon you. In the mean time, I " ſhall never ceaſe glorifying God, for having " endowed you with ſuch uſeful talents, and " giving me ſo good a ſon.

" Your affectionate father,

" THOMAS LYTTELTON."

A few years afterwards (1751), by the death of his father, he inherited a baronet's title with a large eſtate, which, though perhaps he did not augment, he was careful to adorn, by a houſe of great elegance and expence, and by great attention to the decoration of his park.

As he continued his exertions in parliament, he was gradually advancing his claim to profit and preferment; and accordingly was made in time (1754) cofferer and privy counſellor: this place he exchanged next year for the great office of chancellor of the Exchequer; an office, however, that required ſome qualifications which he ſoon perceived himſelf to want.

The year after, his curioſity led him into Wales; of which he has given an account, perhaps rather with too much affectation of delight, to Archibald Bower, a man of whom he had conceived an opinion more favourable than he ſeems to have deſerved, and whom, having once eſpouſed his intereſt and fame, he never was perſuaded to diſown. Bower, whatever was his moral character, did not want abilities; attacked as he was by an univerſal outcry, and that outcry, as it ſeems, the echo of truth, he kept his ground; at laſt, when his defences began to fail him, he ſallied out upon his adverſaries, and his adverſaries retreated.

About this time Lyttelton publiſhed his *Dialogues of the Dead*, which were very eagerly read, though the production rather, as it ſeems, of leiſure than of ſtudy, rather effuſions than compoſitions. The names of his perſons too often enable the reader to anticipate their converſation; and when they have met, they too often part without concluſion. He has copied *Fenelon* more than *Fontenelle*.

When they were firſt publiſhed, they were kindly commended by the *Critical Reviewers*; and poor Lyttelton, with humble gratitude, returned his acknowledgements in a note which I have read; acknowledgements either for flattery or juſtice.

When, in the latter part of the laſt reign, the inauſpicious commencement of the war made the diſſolution of the miniſtry unavoidable, Sir George Lyttelton, loſing his employment, with the reſt, was recompenſed with a peerage; and reſted from political turbulence in the Houſe of Lords.

His laſt literary production was his *Hiſtory of Henry the Second*, elaborated by the ſearches and deliberations of twenty years, and publiſhed with ſuch anxiety as only vanity can dictate.

The ſtory of this publication is remarkable. The whole work was printed twice over, a great part of it three times, and many ſheets four or five times. The booksellers paid for the firſt impreſſion; but the charges and repeated operations of the preſs were at the expence of the author, whoſe ambitious accuracy is known to have coſt him at leaſt a thouſand pounds. He began to print in 1755. Three volumes appeared in 1764, a ſecond edition of them in 1767, a third edition in 1768, and the concluſion in 1771.

Andrew Reid, a man not without conſiderable abilities, and not unacquainted with letters [illegible] life, undertook to perſuade Lyttelton, as he had perſuaded himſelf, that he was maſter of the ſecret of punctuation; and, as fear begets credulity, he was em-

ployed, I know not at what price, to point the pages of *Henry the Second.* The book was at laſt pointed and printed, and ſent into the world. Lyttelton took money for his copy, of which, when he had paid the *Pointer*, he probably gave the reſt away; for he was very liberal to the indigent.

When time brought the Hiſtory to a third edition, Reid was either dead or diſcarded; and the ſuperintendence of typography and punctuation was committed to a man originally a comb-maker, but then known by the ſtyle of Dr. Saunders. Something uncommon was probably expected, and ſomething uncommon was at laſt done; for to the edition of Dr. Saunders is appended, what the world had hardly ſeen before, a liſt of errors of nineteen pages.

But to politicks and literature there muſt be an end. Lord Lyttelton had never the appearance of a ſtrong or of a healthy man; he had a ſlender uncompacted frame, and a meagre face: he laſted however ſixty years, and then was ſeized with his laſt illneſs. Of his death a very affecting and inſtructive ac-

count has been given by his phyſician, which will ſpare me the taſk of his moral character.

"On Sunday evening the ſymptoms of "his lordſhip's diſorder, which for a week "paſt had alarmed us, put on a fatal ap- "pearance, and his lordſhip believed him- "ſelf to be a dying man. From this time "he ſuffered by reſtleſſneſs rather than pain; "though his nerves were apparently much "fluttered, his mental faculties never ſeem- "ed ſtronger, when he was thoroughly "awake.

"His lordſhip's bilious and hepatic com- "plaints ſeemed alone not equal to the ex- "pected mournful event; his long want of "ſleep, whether the conſequence of the irri- "tation in the bowels, or, which is more "probable, of cauſes of a different kind, ac- "counts for his loſs of ſtrength, and for his "death, very ſufficiently.

"Though his lordſhip wiſhed his ap- "proaching diſſolution not to be lingering, "he waited for it with reſignation. He

" ſaid, ' It is a folly, a keeping me in mi-
" ſery, now to attempt to prolong life;'
" yet he was eaſily perſuaded, for the ſatiſ-
" faction of others, to do or take any thing
" thought proper for him. On Saturday he
" had been remarkably better, and we were
" not without ſome hopes of his recovery.

" On Sunday, about eleven in the fore-
" noon, his lordſhip ſent for me, and ſaid
" he felt a great hurry, and wiſhed to have
" a little converſation with me in order to
" divert it. He then proceeded to open the
" fountain of that heart, from whence good-
" neſs had ſo long flowed as from a copious
" ſpring. ' Doctor,' ſaid he, ' you ſhall be
" my confeſſor: when I firſt ſet out in the
" world, I had friends who endeavoured to
" ſhake my belief in the Chriſtian religion.
" I ſaw difficulties which ſtaggered me; but
" I kept my mind open to conviction. The-
" evidences and doctrines of Chriſtianity,
" ſtudied with attention, made me a moſt
" firm and perſuaded believer of the Chriſ-
" tian religion. I have made it the rule of
" my life, and it is the ground of my fu-
" ture hopes. I have erred and ſinned;
" but

" but have repented, and never indulged any " vicious habit. In politicks, and publick " life, I have made publick good the rule of " my conduct. I never gave counſels which " I did not at the time think the beſt. I " have ſeen that I was ſometimes in the " wrong, but I did not err deſignedly. I " have endeavoured, in private life, to do " all the good in my power, and never for " a moment could indulge malicious or un- " juſt deſigns upon any perſon whatſoever."

" At another time he ſaid, ' I muſt leave " my ſoul in the ſame ſtate it was in before " this illneſs; I find this a very inconvenient " time for ſolicitude about any thing.'

" On the evening, when the ſymptoms of " death came on, he ſaid, ' I ſhall die; " but it will not be your fault.' When " lord and lady Valentia came to ſee his lord- " ſhip, he gave them his ſolemn benedic- " tion, and ſaid, ' Be good, be virtuous, " my lord; you muſt come to this.' Thus " he continued giving his dying benediction " to all around him. On Monday morning " a lucid interval gave ſome ſmall hopes,

"but theſe vaniſhed in the evening; and he "continued dying, but with very little un- "eaſineſs, till Tueſday morning, Auguſt 22, "when between ſeven and eight o'clock he "expired, almoſt without a groan."

His lordſhip was buried at Hagley; and the following inſcription is cut on the ſide of his lady's monument:

"This unadorned ſtone was placed here
"By the partieular deſire and expreſs
"directions of the late Right Honourable
"GEORGE Lord LYTTELTON,
"Who died Auguſt 22, 1773, aged 64."

Lord Lyttelton's Poems are the works of a man of literature and judgement, devoting part of his time to verſification. They have nothing to be deſpiſed, and little to be admired. Of his *Progreſs of Love*, it is ſufficient blame to ſay that it is paſtoral. His blank verſe in *Blenheim* has neither much force nor much elegance. His little performances, whether Songs or Epigrams, are ſometimes ſprightly and ſometimes inſipid.

His

His epiſtolary pieces have a ſmooth equability, which cannot much tire, becauſe they are ſhort, but which ſeldom *elevates* or *ſurpriſes*. But from this cenſure ought to be excepted his *Advice to Belinda*, which, though for the moſt part written when he was very young, contains much truth and much prudence, very elegantly and vigorouſly expreſſed, and ſhews a mind attentive to life, and a power of poetry which cultivation might have raiſed to excellence.

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